LIBRARY
OF THE
Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.
Case, PQ4390 Division
Shelf, R82 Section
Book, V. 2 No.

# DISQUISITIONS

ON

# THE ANTIPAPAL SPIRIT

WHICH PRODUCED

# THE REFORMATION;

## ITS SECRET INFLUENCE

## ON THE LITERATURE OF EUROPE IN GENERAL, AND OF ITALY IN PARTICULAR.

BY

GABRIELE ROSSETTI,

PROFESSOR OF ITALIAN LITERATURE IN KING'S COLLEGE.

---

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

MISS CAROLINE WARD.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

---

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER & CO., CORNHILL,

BOOKSELLERS TO THEIR MAJESTIES.

1834.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY STEWART AND CO.,
OLD BAILEY.

# CONTENTS

TO THE

# SECOND VOLUME.


CHAPTER XVII.

Page

Dante figured in Adam ..... 1

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the means employed to point out a Figurative Object ..... 19

CHAPTER XIX.

Internal essence of Dante's Poem, as developed in the Second Part 34

CHAPTER XX.

On other Authors who have treated of an Allegorical Judgment .. 61

CHAPTER XXI.

On other Writers who conformed to the Political Spirit of Dante's Poem ..... 67

CHAPTER XXII.

Conclusion of the Preliminary Remarks on the Platonic Love ..... 96

CHAPTER XXIII.

On the Extension of the Secret School ..... 111

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the Ancient Interpreters of Dante's Poem ..... 122

Page

CHAPTER XXV.

Was the Sectarian Language known to the Papal Court and the Inquisition? ..... 139

CHAPTER XXVI.

Confirmation of various Opinions advanced in the course of the Work ..... 165

CHAPTER XXVII.

On the Five Epochs of the Sect ..... 185

Conclusion ..... 195

Notes ..... 207

Letter to Charles Lyell, Esq. ..... 245

## CHAPTER XVII.

### DANTE FIGURED IN ADAM.

All the figurative tales which relate the history of Dante's sectarian life, agree in the fact of his being the introducer of the new style of allegory. Some call him the *creator* of the language in which he wrote; and that he was the author of the great change which took place in it, no one, who has examined his writings, can doubt for a moment. When we give the interpretation of the Vita Nuova, and of that part of the Convito which is connected with it, opinion will be strengthened into certainty. In the meanwhile, his own words will be our best authorities.

We have long since heard him declare, that he was forced to leave off writing of Love; because the countenance of his lady *appeared* changed. He repeats the same thing at the beginning of his new profession of sectarian faith, which is commonly called the *Creed*. "No longer will I write of this *false love:* I will now discourse on *God as a Christian.*"

This accords with his determination to throw himself into the arms of *Piety*, his enemy, as a means of conciliating all parties. In the treatise of the Vulg. Eloq., called by him New Latin, he explains more fully the necessity which induced him to adopt the new style. *Men*, he says, have need of a form of language wherein to express their ideas, but not *devils:* in which name he includes not only papalists, but also those apostate sectarians who had revealed the first jargon, and who, in fact, had no occasion

to resort to subterfuges to make known their opinions. "If we consider what is our purpose in speaking, we can come but to one conclusion. Our intention is to make known to others what is passing in our own minds. To those who bring against this argument the case of the spirits who fell from heaven, we say that that case can never be applied to us justly; for they refused to wait for the divine aid. Those demons, when they want to confer together in their wickedness, have occasion for nothing except a knowledge of one another, &c., which they already have; for they were all well known to each other before their fall."—(B. 1. ch. 2.) He proceeds afterwards to deplore the calamities which were brought on by the confusion of tongues in the Tower of Babel, which was raised by the advice of the *Giant;* and he lays so much more stress upon that than he does upon the original sin, which he only touches on carelessly, that we may believe it to have been a woe of his own time, instead of an event over which five thousand years had rolled. It is curious to hear him declare, that he blushed for the disgrace of mankind. "I blush at the thought of calling to remembrance the disgrace of mankind; and my heart revolts from the idea of it. Still the subject must be dwelt on; and I may not be silent. O Nature! how prone art thou to sin, and how wedded to thy original wickedness! Was it not enough for thee to be banished for thy first fault from the garden of life and joy?* Behold, reader, the folly of man! Forgetful of his former punishments, or ridiculing them, and reckless of the evils in store for him, he rebelled a third time, sinning in the pride of foolishness; and, led on by the iniquitous persuasions of *the giant*, he made an attempt to overcome not nature only, but nature's author, *God;* and began to build a tower in Sennaar, which was called Babel, signifying confusion; intending to climb into heaven, and

* From the Earthly Paradise, the figure of a perfect Empire.

there equal or vanquish his Maker.* O boundless mercy of heaven's Emperor! What father would pardon such insults from a son?"—(Ch. vii.)

But enough of Dante's prolix lamentations on the confusion of tongues; their design is what we have undertaken to explain, and it was this: He intended to convey the information that, when the sectarian world arose to a new life, *he* was the Adam who fixed the value of each word in the reformed language; and, as usual, his meaning is shown mysteriously. The title to the 6th chap. of book 1. bears a double sense. "In what language *man* first spoke, and how he was the author of this work." *Outwardly* these words mean how he was the author of this work on Vulg. Eloq.; and *inwardly* they signify how he was the author of the new *language*. In order to protract the equivoque, he winds about the paths of his argument like a serpent. "We must try to discover in what language that man spoke who was *born* without a mother; and who never passed through infancy nor youth. In this, as in many other things, Pietramala is a very populous city, and it is the country of the greatest number of the sons of Adam." Does the Bible tell us that Adam formed the primitive language in the city of Pietramala? or that his children inhabited such a city? If so, in what page? Dante makes a circuit of the globe, from pole to pole, and then tells us that he was born in Florence. And Florence was the Pietramala where the Adam, *who was the author of this work*, was born *allegorically* without any mother; the originator, the creator of the new sectarian tongue. I am aware that there is a village of that name in Tuscany; but I am also aware that the exiled Florentines were accustomed to apply it in contempt to their capital city. Dante hints, but whether truly we know not, that he was engaged, with the Emperor Henry, in the composition of the new language

* See the 14th chapter of Isaiah.

before those troubles broke out which the Pope so materially fomented; and hence, after speaking of his own birth-place, Florence, he adds: "To return, then, to our subject; we say that the first soul was created by God with a certain form of language; and this language would have been always spoken, had not the arrogance of men caused the confusion of tongues. In this form, spoke Adam and all his posterity, until the building of the Tower of Babel, or confusion; and, after the confusion, the children of Heber, who were called Hebrews, were the sole inheritors of the language; in order that our Redeemer, who was born of their race in his human nature, might speak in the language of grace, and not in that of confusion. Therefore Hebrew was the language created by the first speaker," (that is, by the Adam of Pietramala).—Ch. vi.

After dwelling at some length on the crime of Nimrod, and the consequent confusion, he says: "Those who inherited the holy language were not present at the impious attempt, nor did they approve of it; on the contrary, they abhorred its presumption, and ridiculed the folly of the wicked builders; but, in point of numbers, they were in the minority."—(B. 1. c. vii.) He writes, in chapter v., that Adam first spoke in the place where he was created. If that was *out of* the Earthly Paradise, there he spoke; but if *within* it, within he spoke; and we know right well what place he figured by the Earthly Paradise. When Henry of Luxembourg entered Italy, Dante went to meet him; and, as he writes, his lips *paid him their debt.* What was this debt? We shall hear his own words to convince us.

He is not only clever enough to find out that Adam was the first man who spoke, but to guess at the very first word which he uttered. "We believe, therefore, that Adam was allowed by his Creator to be the first to speak; and all of *sound intellect* will readily divine what was the first word he uttered: that word was *God;* that is to say, *El;*

and he spoke it, whether as a question, or in answer to a question. In fact, it would be equally absurd and unreasonable to suppose that man would give a name to any thing before he had first pronounced the name of God, by whom and for whom he was himself created."—(Ch. iv.) But, then, these questions present themselves naturally to our minds: Why did he mention that some language of correspondence was necessary for *men*, but not for *devils*? Why recall the subject of the confusion of tongues, or talk of Adam, or of the first language, and first word *El*? The answer is this: He did it that he might pave the way for the introduction of the subject of the language of Italy, called by him *the new Latin*, and *the language of the Court*;* over which presided the *Lord of Courtesy*, the head of the Latin empire, Enrico Lucemburghese, (*El*,) Henry of Luxembourg, to whom he wrote: "I, who write for others, as well as for myself, as becomes me towards your Imperial Majesty, saw you in your goodness, and heard you in your mercy, when my hands touched your feet, and my *lips paid their debt*, and my spirit exulted within me."—(My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.—St. Luke.) Both in the Vita Nuova, and in the Canzoni, he calls his *lady*, over and over again, his *saviour* and his *salvation*. And so Cino, his friend, exclaimed, on the coming of Henry, in the words of Simeon: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen *thy salvation*."

Before the sectarian language underwent its audacious

* When we clearly understand this treatise, we shall find that it contains a long list of troubadours, writers in the *Langues d'Oc*, D'Oil, and de Sì, who are praised up to the skies. "Now, when they intend to affirm any thing, some say Oc, others Oil, and others Sì; that is, the Spaniards, the French, and the Italians. It is plainly proved, that these three idioms are all originally derived from one: for they call several things by the same names; such as God, heaven, Love, sea, earth, and to live, to die, to love, with many others."—(B. 1. ch. 8.)

reform, this emperor and God was mystically pointed out by the letter *I*, the ninth of the alphabet, and the initial both of *Imperadore* and *Iddio*.

Every sectarian degree is characterised by some mystic number; and the first degrees are described by a progressive series of odd numbers. Hence 3, 5, 7, 9, constitute the essence of the first four. When the man is born again, and rises to a new life, these *numbers* are changed into so many *years;* and these symbolic *years* are expressed by an equal number of *lights;* those lights being relative to the different planets, according to their order, thus: Three—moon, 3 lights, 3 years: Five—Mercury, 5 lights, 5 years: Seven—Venus, 7 lights, 7 years: Nine—Sun, 9 lights, 9 years. There is a secret connexion between the *moon* and the *sun*, (the first and fourth degrees); because 9 is the quadrate of 3, ($3 \times 3 = 9$): the 3 of the moon signifies the 3 phases; the 9 of the sun, the 9 heavens of Ptolemy. In order to render the meaning still more mysterious, the letters of the alphabet are sometimes substituted for the arithmetical ciphers. When this is the case, the 3 of the moon becomes C, *Cynthia*, the third letter, whose curve expresses the moon's form. The 9 of the sun is described by the 9th letter, I, which being the sign of unity, is the most eminent of all. Hence, when Alighieri says that his lady was a 9, he calls her at the same time an *I*, the 9th figure. There were, in ancient times, 30 letters in the Italian alphabet; and Dante had a double meaning for every one of these letters or numbers: one for the unlearned, the other for the learned reader. These double meanings were discovered by *two keys;* one of which was of *silver*, answering to the *silvery moon*, (the key of error); and the other of *gold*, corresponding with the golden sun, (the key of truth); and, for that reason, Madonna is always described as having *two keys* of the *heart*, (viz. the secret). The 30 letters of the alphabet, then, contain two series of secrets; that is, *sixty*. Thirty were opened with the silver key,

and thirty with the golden one. Up to this time, Dante's poem has been unlocked with the first only, which gives the Catholic interpretation. He calls this the most valuable, because it saved him from persecution; and the other the most difficult, because with it the secrets are all revealed. He alludes to them, where he is carried to the portal of initiation by the *eagle* of his dream, or the *Lucia* of his waking moments. He finds the guard with a sword in his hand, and covered with a mantle, whose hue was that of *ashes*, (outward *death*).

> " From underneath that vestment forth he drew
> Two keys, of metal twain; the one was *gold*,
> Its fellow *silver*. With the pallid first,
> And next the burnish'd, he so plyed the gate
> As to content me well. ' Whenever one
> Faileth of these, that in the keyhole straight
> It turn not, to this alley then expect
> Access in vain.'
> One is more *precious*; but the other needs
> *Skill* and *sagacity*, large share of each,
> Ere its good task to disengage the knot
> Be worthily performed. From Peter these
> I hold." (Purg. 9.)

And Peter here signifies the Ghibelline sect, whose object was Rome; as we have already shown in the preceding chapter.

There is a passage in the Paradise, which relates to the subject we are now upon. The poet is examined in *faith* by St. Peter, in *hope* by St. James, and in *charity* by St. John, whom he here calls the *eagle of God*, (this triple examination corresponds, as we have already shown, with the three *pillars* of the Paulicians, and with the three allegorical *pilgrimages* to Rome, Galicia and Jerusalem, made by the Ghibellines or Romei, the Albigenses or pilgrims, and the Templars or palmers); and, after explaining to the last the reasons which caused him to give up his *wrong love* (for the woman or Babylon),

and turn to the *right* (for Beatrice or Jerusalem), he turns and sees *Adam;* and, by using the equivoque between *me* and *me'*, he says that it was *himself whom he saw.*

> " Onde *me* che dinanzi vidi poi,
> E quasi stupefatto domandai." (Par. 26.)

And that Adam's spirit was moved to joyousness which shone transparent through his covering, when he spoke to and gave him pleasure. Let us hear now how he pleased him.

Of the many questions he might have put to this first soul, he confines himself to four; of which two are quite futile, and never would have entered the mind of any rational being, and two might be answered by a reference to any elementary chronology; but all were put with a view of informing us, that Dante, the reformer of the jargon, figured himself in Adam, the former of the first language. He asks the first man, in what language he first spoke; and Adam (Dante himself) answers, " You have no need to speak your wishes — I know them already. You desire to know how I cherished the *cause of the great wrath,** and the language *which I used and made.* The language I spoke† was worn out before Nimrod's race began their impious labours — before I descended into hell;‡ the highest on earth was called *I*, and afterwards *El.*"§ Dante entered the terrestrial Para-

* Which led him to make war on Piety.

† The first, or erotic language.

‡ Before he began his poem.

§ Read the commentary of Biagioli, who has very good authority for differing from the edition of La Crusca in this passage. Dante's anonymous friend and interpreter writes *I* and *El* in his comment; his words are as follows: " He (Adam) says that, before he died, God was called I, and afterwards El." This plainly shows that the text which he used was thus written; and so also we read in the celebrated Manuscript which is in the Borbonico Museum at Naples.

dise at the first hour of the day (Purg. 27 & 28.), and quitted it after the sun had passed its meridian (33.); and Adam, who knows every thing that Dante desired to learn, or to teach us, answers his second question by informing him that he remained in the earthly paradise from the first hour of the day to the seventh. Therefore Dante and Adam were each nearly *seven* hours in paradise.

Dante, from the moment when the sun rose on him in purgatory (canto 2.), to the departure of the same luminary (canto 8), took 930 steps in *his way of sighs.* Adam knew this quite well; and therefore he informs him that he saw the sun return, in his annual course, 930 times while he was on the earth; and the poet compares the verses with the sun, because he calls the new language which he *used and made*, the *sun*, as we shall very shortly read.

Adam knows that Dante, from the period of his leaving Limbo to his description of the fall of the *four* symbolic stars, and the rising of the *three* in their places, wrote to the number of 4302 verses, that is, counting from the 1st verse of canto 5. of the Inferno, to the 93d verse of canto 8. of the Purgatory;* and, therefore, he says that he remained in the place whence Virgil removed at Beatrice's order, that is, in Limbo, until the sun "had made complete, four thousand and three hundred rounds and twice, his annual journey."

It is at the end of the first treatise of the Convito, that he calls his new language *the new sun:* "This will be a *new light, a new sun*, which will rise when the *old one* sets, and give light to those who are in darkness." (page 99.) Before this, he declares this *language* or *sun* to be *fire within* and *smoke without;* adding, "I have a fond and perfect regard for my own language. The

* "The four resplendent stars (cardinal virtues) thou saw'st this morn,
Are there beneath, and these (theological virtues) ris'n in their stead."

father loves his own child better than another's; the physician prefers medicine above every other art; the musician loves music. Therefore, if love be produced by relationship, I must naturally love my own language better than every other. I have received favours from it of the highest nature. It has introduced me into the way of science; with it all my time is passed."

In the last treatise, he desires his followers not to stray far from the track of his *new* footsteps; but, to comprehend him fully, we must recollect the secret meaning of words used in opposition, such as frost and fire, corresponding with hatred and love. Lucifer, for instance, is in a dark frozen lake, and God in a heaven of light and fire. Snow and flame are opposite terms; hence a fall of snow expresses a papal persecution, and the desolation it produces. Let us hear this confirmed by our Adam, in a description of his own peculiar *way* or *language*: "It is a plain intersected by footpaths, and very difficult of access, owing to the hedges, ditches, and large stones which impede the way continually. The *snow* had covered the ground, and effaced every vestige of the path, when a traveller arrived from a distant part of the country. He felt great anxiety to reach a house which lay in a contrary direction, and, by dint of skill, perseverance and genius,* and without one to guide him, he succeeded in gaining the right path which led him direct to the house. Another traveller soon arrived at the same spot, who was going to the house also, and, although he had nothing to do but to follow the footmarks which the first had left, he stupidly missed his way; and, getting entangled among ruins and thickets, he wandered about, and never reached his destination at all. Which, then, was the more courageous of these two? I answer, the first — and the last

* "O Muses! O high genius! now vouchsafe your aid!" he exclaimed, as he departed on his new road.

was a coward." (p. 208.) Many of the descendants of our Adam did, notwithstanding, follow his footsteps faithfully through the plain of snow.

On what occasion did Dante change the sectarian jargon? We have already shown that he did it, when, to escape persecution, he feigned to become the partisan of his enemy. He wrote to the cardinals in a strain of pretended devotion to the Pope, and the lady of his mind expired at the same moment. "He is *dead* who submits to his dominion." (Figueiras.) We shall now proceed to show with how much skill he explained figuratively this difficult point of his life. Having no longer any protection to expect from his own party, he was left defenceless and exposed to his enemy's power — he was "*not dead nor living.*" (Inf. 34.) He saw the Emperor who sways the realm of sorrow, half uprise from the ice with his irresistible arms, which are compared to the giants who surrounded him; and three frozen winds came from his enormous wings, *the banners of hell's monarch*, which congealed every thing before them. Virgil then bade Dante take him round the neck, and panting like a man much wearied, he seized Lucifer "the abhorred worm that boreth through the world," by the hair of his body, and told his follower that, by such *stairs as these*, he was to *depart from evil.* Dante, by this means, issued forth through an opening in the rock, and his guide warily followed him. The Florentine had before left the Pope (Inf. 19.) with his feet up in the air, and in the same situation he beheld him here again.

> "I raised mine eyes,
> Believing that I Lucifer should see
> Where he *was lately left*, but saw him now
> With *legs held upward.* Let the *grosser sort*,
> Who see not what the point was I had pass'd,
> Bethink them if sore toil oppress'd me then." (Inf. 34).

When they read these verses, those whom the *new sun* had enlightened saw clearly what was the difficult point he had passed; but not the *grosser* sort, who were still in darkness. As soon as Virgil and Dante had issued from the rock, the former announced to his follower that the *sun* had set, and that the *sun* had risen at the same moment; and he showed him how, "in space so brief, from eve to morn, the sun hath made his transit;" how the old language had given place to the new jargon. "This will be a *new light*, a *new sun*, which will arise when the other sets, and will give light to those who are in darkness and obscurity (under Satan's dominion), instead of the customary sun which will cease to shine." The poet here meant to signify to us: Search my allegorical comedy; seek the place where I describe the sun to *rise* when it *sets;* see what I then do, and try to find out what I mean by saying that I clung round Virgil's neck, and mounted by the hair of Lucifer's body.

At the beginning of canto 24. of the Inferno, the poet redoubles his indications. When he leaves the dismal abodes of the barterers and hypocrites, in whom he described the Florentine Blacks and the Guelphs of Bologna who exiled and persecuted him, he commences that canto in the following style: — When the frozen rime falls, which is the image of snow, the village hind, unprovided with a cloak, looks out upon the whitening field with dismay at seeing the heavy shower; but when *another sun rises*, and the snow vanishes, his cheerfulness returns, and he resumes his wonted occupations. So my guide Virgil encouraged me, with the same soft look with which he delivered me from the she-wolf at the foot of the mountain. After this comparison, Virgil, thinking on some means of escape, shows his follower how they are to quit the abode of the hypocrites, to which they had been driven by persecutions. He tells him to grasp

at certain stones; and, following the advice given, Dante climbs gradually up by their assistance. By the hairs of the triple Lucifer's body, Virgil mounted with Dante, clinging round his neck; from stone to stone, Dante climbed the bridge of the triple Geryon, in pursuance of Virgil's directions: by the first means they quitted the valley of the damned; by the last, they escaped from the abode of the hypocrites. The hairs, and the stones or crags, are the same; and the ice in which Lucifer is bound, and the frozen winds which come from his wings; the snow which frightens the peasant, and the snowy path in which the poet left traces of his footsteps, with directions to those who came after him not to lose them, (Convito): all these have but one meaning.

A great part of the first treatise is taken up with the description of this new way, and with his arguments why his work should be written in Italian instead of Latin, and the Convito likewise which explains its nature. A few extracts from that part where he speaks of the commentary will suffice: "He who works in the service of others, ought to know how to serve them effectually; otherwise his duty will be felt a labour, and soon abandoned. I have made this comment that it may be a servant, as it were, to the canzoni, and anticipate and obey the wants of its master; and this it could not have done, had I written it in *Latin*. And again, a servant ought to know the character of his master, and of his master's friends; and a Latin comment would not have known either. For we do not know a thing perfectly, merely because we know its species; we may know an animal, without knowing whether it be a *dog*, a *wolf* or a *goat*.* Thus, the servant cannot know *the friends*, because it is impossible to know *them* until he

* Conventional terms. The dog is opposed to the wolf, the goat to the lamb, &c. &c.

knows the *principal.* Having shown why a Latin comment would not have been a useful servant, I will now prove why it would not have been an obedient one, for obedience must be entire. If I were commanded to put on *two* dresses, and still only put on *one* of them, I should but *half* obey; and this would have been the case with the Latin comment; for, by only *half* obeying (that is, by forgetting the other dress), it would have exposed a great part of its meaning. Entire obedience consists in *going,* but not *too far;* and here the Latin would have erred in both ways — it would have done too much and too little at the same time. The canzoni, to which this comment is a servant, were written for the understandings of those who are of *sound intellect;* but the Latin would have shown them to *people* of *another language,* and therein would have exceeded its orders. I say to all, that nothing, bound and *inlaid with mosaical harmony,* can be transposed from one language into another, without losing all its softness and harmony." Thus, does he declare that his poem is inlaid with mosaical harmony; that it is an invisible chain-work of ideas which convey two meanings; and justly does he say that they cannot be translated, without losing their secret virtue; *literally,* they may, and have been so translated, but their *inward* meaning has been absolutely destroyed. It is in this place that Dante expressed his design of writing the treatise on the Vulg. Eloq. "This will be more fully discussed in a book which I intend, God willing, to write on Eloquence."

The Adam, then, who invented the new language, who rose again to a new life, and was the object of so many figures and images relating to the true Adam, was Dante himself. In the Purgatory, he says that *he was clothed with Adam's flesh,* that he had with him *much of Adam,* and that when he drew near to the tree in the garden of Eden, all murmured "*Adam;*" that when the *three*

*night* stars had risen in the place of the *four day stars*, he saw the *serpent* coming, *perhaps the same that gave to Eve the bitter fruit*, who, as soon as it felt itself attacked by the *two pointless swords*, fled precipitately, because our Adam, while he wounded it with two swords, took away from it the power of biting. Again, in the allegorical castle in Limbo, which stood secure in the midst of hell, surrounded by *seven* walls, and entered by *seven* gates, Dante, who had passed over the water as though it had been dry land, asked Virgil if any one ever left that place, and afterwards became happy; and Virgil, who understood *his secret meaning*, answered, "I was yet new to this state, when I beheld a mighty one come, crowned with victorious trophies. He drew forth the shade of Adam, Abel, and other patriarchs, and made them blessed; but know, that before them, no human spirit was saved." Most truly said! Before Adam created this new form of language, murders, burnings, tortures of every kind that cruelty could devise, had been the portion of those unhappy spirits whom the magic of that tongue saved from further persecutions.

In order to detect at once the absurdity of a *literal* interpretation of Virgil's answer, let us only think for a moment on the subject. A Pagan tells a Christian (as something quite new to him) that before Christ came none were saved. Now that we comprehend the mystic language, this futile answer, delivered with so much solemnity, is to us another proof that, before our Adam clothed himself in the wolf's skin, to pierce the heart of Satan, the sectarians, deprived of every hope, were exposed to the full vengeance of that wrath from whose effects they rushed into profaneness for safety. After that time, however, they were unmolested, and continued, with an outward raiment of sanctity, to labour under-ground; and though it is very sure that the

Romish church was aware of their secret enmity, it dared not throw off the mask of dissimulation. At length, at the beginning of the last century, they issued from their hiding places, and declared their opinions boldly; and for this crime they were pursued by the anathema of a Pope, who likened them to *thieves* entering a house in the garb of friends, and to *wolves* creeping into the lord's vineyard, in order to lay it waste; adding, "In order to shut the door against their evil doings, and prevent them from sinning with impunity; and for other just and reasonable motives *known to ourselves*—after the most certain conviction and mature deliberation, we condemn and prohibit their meetings and councils."* They might with reason have exclaimed: Excommunicate your predecessor, that Boniface VIII., whose ill-advised persecution drove Dante to desperation, and forced him, as a last resource, to draw that two-edged and pointless word, which has inflicted so many and so irremediable wounds in the course of more than five centuries. Had he been left in peace, his songs would have been of love only; and those things which should be held sacred and inviolable, would have been for ever untouched by him. Bloodthirsty intolerance has been the real destroyer of the Holy See!

Numberless are the writers who have chosen for their subject the sectarian life of Dante, and pointed him out as the creator of this new and subtle language. Boccaccio (besides what we have already shown, of Whiteflower, described as a lady, who was shut up in the mystical Egyptian tower, whence she escaped, to turn Christian in Rome; besides his Tedaldo degli Elisei, the

* See the Anathema of Clement XII. published in 1739. Some say that this Pope had formerly been a sectarian himself, and that hence, he was perfectly well acquainted with the nature of the society.

Florentine poet, who was a perfect *living* image of the *dead* Boniface of Pontremoli; besides his Florentine Blandizio, who, under a pretence of peace, stole the daughter and the treasures of the king of Babylon :) Boccaccio, we repeat, relates the same thing again and again; and, in his life of the poet, he says, that his mother called him *Dante* (a giver) from a dream she had before his birth, in which she saw that he would give wonderful things. "They called him *Dante*, and rightly, for *the effect followed the name.* This was the *Dante* who was chosen to *open the way* for the return of the banished Muses into Italy. He showed the beauties of the Florentine language, and regulated every thing by *certain numbers.* He brought to *life* the poetry which was *dead* before. All these things, *duly observed*, prove that no other name than *Dante* could have been given to him." This he writes in the life of the poet; and in the Fiammetta, and, in the pastoral of Glaucus, he condescends even to a play upon a word, to show us that Dante, by his descent into hell, and the birth of Christ, *gave a way* to the new style of figures : "La sepoltura del gran Miseno, *Dante via* al regno di Plutone." (B. 1.) "Pastores puero portantes thura sabeos, sidere *Dante viam.*" These words are put into the mouth of him, who, as a fisherman transformed into a god, figures Peter the Apostle; that is, Glaucus, the lover of the sorceress Circe, who makes sport of the holiest mysteries. The following lines describe the effects of the altered language: — "All sing in joyful glee: Plutarch alone, sadly and miserably weeping in his dismal cave, strengthens his walls and makes fast his gates. Then sprang up from the thickets, boughs of *two-coloured olive.* While Glaucus sang, the Tyber hushed its murmurs." Would we know who is this Glaucus, who scoffs so deridingly at the catholic doctrines? *Sidere*

*Dante viam*—we shall find him, gazing into the *eyes* of Beatrice:

> " And I with ken
> Fix'd upon her, from upward gaze remov'd,
> At her aspect; such outwardly became,
> As *Glaucus* when he tasted of the herb
> That made him peer among the ocean gods;
> Words may not tell of that transhuman change;
> And therefore let th' example serve, though weak,
> For those whom grace hath better proof in store." (Par. 1.)

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ON THE MEANS EMPLOYED TO POINT OUT A FIGURATIVE OBJECT.

To direct the mind of the reader to the secret essence of the mysterious scenes penned by the writers of this sect, the scene itself was usually preceded by some hint, which was eminently calculated to show the nature of the object which was to follow. This is the case with all the visions of Boccaccio's Filocopo; and with the Divine Comedy also. For instance: before we enter the city of Dis, we meet "the *Florentine* spirit who tears himself with his teeth;" on our way to the abyss, we see some condemned on the first bridge, who are compared with those who go to *St. Peter's at Rome;* and when we come to the last, we behold Nimrod with a head like the pine of *St. Peter's at Rome.* The same may be remarked in other works of our poet; and in this chapter, we propose to select for consideration two similar guides to important information, one from the pages of the Vita Nuova, the other from the poem itself.

After he has quoted his own letter to the Italian Cardinals, in which he announces the death of Beatrice, Dante goes on to say, that he met certain pilgrims who were going to Rome to see the blessed image which Christ left to us as a copy of his own figure; they seemed very thoughtful, and he reflected within himself, that he too

could make them *weep*, with words that would make all *weep* who understood them. He writes a *pious sonnet* for these *pensive* pilgrims, and says: "I said *pilgrims* in the widest sense of the word; they call themselves *Romei*, because they go to Rome, where these whom I call *pilgrims* were going." After this, he tells us that he united three sonnets into one, to send them to the same person. The first is mentioned a few pages before: "O come and listen to my sighs (verses) all ye of gentle hearts, for *piety* invites ye." The second is the *pious* one which he made for those whom he calls pilgrims; the third concludes the Vita Nuova.

Now all that immediately precedes this last, is the lamp which guides us to its interpretation. The *pilgrim* who goes to Rome to see the blessed image left by Christ, &c., is no other than the *wandering thought* of Dante, which becomes a *pilgrim spirit*, and mounts into the skies to see his lady, who is the image before spoken of. The following words explain the last sonnet; and will enable the incredulous to understand how Dante entered Dis — Florence in his personified thought, transformed into a pilgrim spirit. "I tell where my thought goes, and then I call it a pilgrim spirit: for like a spirit, it ascends on high, and like a pilgrim it is away from its own country." He addressed the sonnet to the ladies: "I say, *dearest ladies*, in order that it may be understood that I am speaking to ladies" (wonderful information!), that is, that he speaks only to those ladies who are not *females*. (Vita Nuova, p. 26). And to these same ladies, he exclaimed: "Ladies, to you who have an *intellect of love*, I will talk of my lady, for it is not a thing to be spoken of, except before such as you."

After the sonnet which he addressed to these ladies, to describe his wandering thought uprising to see in his lady, the image of Christ, "in that Rome where Christ is a Roman," he says: "a wonderful vision (that of the poem) appeared to me, in which I saw things which made

me determine to speak no more of this blessed one, until I could converse of her worthily; and to arrive at this, I study incessantly as she knows—and if it should be his pleasure, by whom all things live, to preserve my life for a few years, I hope to speak of her in a way never before attempted; and then may it please him who is the *Lord of Courtesy*, to suffer my soul to see the glory of its lady, that blessed Beatrice who beholds the face of him who is blessed for ever and ever." End of the Vita Nuova. What profanation! and all caused by a blind persecution on one side, and a longing wish for peace on the other.

Dante's idea of investing his thoughts with the habit of a pilgrim, was imitated by other poets also; for Petrarch, who fell in love with Laura on Good Friday (Son. 3.), and who compared her birth with that of Christ (Son. 4.), went as a pilgrim also, to see the image of his lady in Rome, and beheld her real form in Christ. See Son. 14. In a far different manner, will Petrarch answer us when we question him concerning all these mysteries. We shall not have to struggle through all the enigmas which cloud the works of Dante and Boccaccio; but we shall see most clearly that if that fantastic passion, called Platonic Love, has never yet been justly estimated, the fault is not in the lovers, but in the critics, who persist in seeing nothing mysterious in their words, but on the contrary, evident proofs of a sincere and ingenuous affection. Let us now show a striking instance in Dante, of a figurative scene being preceded by its interpretation.

Before he exhibited his grand picture of the earthly paradise, he prepared us to expect its real nature. Not only did he explain in theory how we are to understand the good and bad love, the first for the pure, and the last for the impure object, but he drew a miniature of both, previous to the execution of the full length portraits; as

a painter of our own time sketches out his ideas on paper before he commences working on canvass. Let us see now if we have not truth on our side, when we affirm that Dante did all he could do, to make himself understood, and that others have determined not to understand him.

The mystic scene of the earthly paradise is in the second part of the poem; and the interpretation of that scene is in the very same part, and immediately before it.

The sixteenth Canto is employed in explaining that Papal Rome was the cause of the corruption of the world. The poet's reasoning may be compressed into a few words. Naturally, he says, man aims at what he believes to be for his happiness; but from his birth, he is always wavering between good and evil; to lead him from evil to good it is necessary that laws and a ruler should be ordained to govern mankind—the New Jerusalem, *the true city;* to the end that every citizen may be a support to it, and that the Emperor may show himself to the least among them a tower and shining light. The laws are there, but there is none to execute them; for the pastor who governs there, while he preaches virtue, practises vice; and persuades the people to deny the knowledge of the strength of the tower of that true city; hence the light failing them, disorders and crimes are perpetrated. It is not nature then that is corrupt; it is the wickedness of Rome which has transformed the world into a vast area of misery and error. From these arguments it is clear that Dante looked upon the tendency of men to follow the bad example of Rome, as the origin of the social disorganization.

In the two following Cantos (17 and 18,) Virgil explains to him the meaning of the word *love*, which he defines to be *inclination;* and according to the character of the object we love, he considers the sentiment either laudable or improper. "Hence you must understand that *Love*

is in you the germ of every virtue, or of every vice." In order to rivet our attention on this *Love*, Dante entreats Virgil to continue his discourse :

> " Wherefore I pray thee, father, whom this heart
> Holds dearest, thou wouldst deign by proof t' unfold
> That *love*, from which, as from their source, thou bring'st
> All good deeds and their opposite."

His guide tells him that the soul of man is made to feel *love*, and naturally turns to what most pleases it, and that that inclining of the heart *is love*. Dante then says: " Thy words and my own answering mind tell me what love is; but here again a doubt intrudes itself. If an outward object excite love in our minds, there is neither merit nor blame to be given, whether the mind go right or wrong, because it only obeys an impulse." To which Virgil replies : " That we must first use *reason*, which distinguishes a good from a bad object; and *then freewill*, which leads us to choose between the two; and as the power of accepting and rejecting lies in ourselves, so as we decide shall we deserve, and meet with reward or punishment." This conversation takes place before the pupil is led by his master to the beloved object. Let us now consider how the abstract theory of Virgil is transformed into an allegorical picture by Dante. The poet ponders on this discourse, and then, by means of the art which animates abstract ideas, he changes his thoughts into a dream;

> " And meditation chang'd to dream."

This dream is the sketch for his grand picture, the key which unlocks his secret design, and in a few lines reveals to us the nature of the opposite females of the poem.

At the beginning of canto 19, he falls asleep, and before him appears a female of deformed and hideous aspect, " with lips that stammered, eyes aslant, distorted feet, hands maimed, and colour pale." At first, he is alive to

all these deformities; but, after his eyes have been fixed on her for some time, he thinks her aspect less distorted, and by degrees every horrible defect seems to vanish. Having thus far succeeded in her designs upon him, the woman spares no flatteries nor allurements to win his love. She tells him that she is the syren who enchants all who listen to her; and that rarely can those, whom she has once enslaved, part from her. And Dante already feels more than half-inclined to bow down before this false deity, when, suddenly, a holy lady appears to confound her devices. Filled with indignation at the artifices with which she has so nearly succeeded in entrapping the unwary dreamer, the August One calls Virgil to succour him; and he, with his eyes always bent upon the holy lady, tears off the vestments which cover the hideousness of the wicked female. At that moment, Dante awakes, and prepares to follow his guide in his ascent of the *stony* mountain. Seeing him walk along, buried in thought, and with his face bent downwards towards the *stone*, Virgil asks him why he thus stoops towards the earth; and he answers him, that the *new vision*, who inclines him *to herself*, causes him to do so.* The guide then asks him, if he has ever seen the old sorceress, who is then *weeping* above them †; and if he knows how man frees himself from her; concluding by bidding him stamp on the earth with his heel, which he does. And then, whom does he behold? Even a *pope*, lying with his face on the *stone*, and *weeping*; who tells him, in Latin, that *his soul cleaves to the earth*; that he is *the successor of Peter*; and that, when he became the *Roman pastor*, he soon discovered the deceits of this life.

* This is relative to Virgil's words: "If thy heart incline towards her, that inclining is called *love*." And Dante is here inclined towards the *stone*.

† Viz., on the mountain, where they afterwards see a *pope weeping*; but the whole scene refers, in the secret sense, to the *woman* who appears afterwards on the mountain.

The dream we have just related, is alluded to by Beatrice, when she meets Dante on the mount, and rebukes him for suffering his steps to turn into the false path, and for following unreal images of good. She there tells him that she has sought, by means of *dreams* and other things, to withdraw him from his errors; and that, thinking nothing so likely to effect his cure as to let him see the effect of this false good, she sent Virgil to show him hell. And that, in order to render him, for the future, invulnerable to the arts of the *syren*, she will now condescend to show him the sublimity of the opposite qualities which centre in herself. To all her reproofs Dante could only reply, that he had not fortitude enough to resist the deceiving lures which had beguiled him.

This analysis ought to convince us that, if Dante wove enigmas, he put into our hands the means of solving them. He tells us in what sense we are to understand the twofold *love*. He explains to us the characters of its objects; the *woman* and the Beatrice. He opens the sealed doors of his sect, and admits us to a sight of its mysteries. What, then, has prevented us from ascertaining the real nature of these two *loves*, or *inclinations?* Why have we never recognized these two *ladies*, or *governments?* Because the double language, with wonderful art, presents before us both *falsehood* and *truth;* but the first is made to stand out conspicuously, while the last is screened behind it. Between Virgil's discourse on the *two loves;* between Dante's dream, wherein he sees the figurative females who are the objects of those loves; no less than fourteen cantos intervene, before the dry theory of the first becomes a dramatic fable, and before the light sketch of the last is enlarged into a superb picture; and these cantos are one long suite of mysteries and equivoque. In the course of them we find the *false* love converted into *avarice*, *gluttony*, and *voluptuousness;* all painted in successive allegorical pictures; and while the reader is bent on the study and interpretation of these

terms, he is but too apt to lose sight of the strict connection which exists between Virgil's treatise and the scene in the Earthly Paradise; and between the females of Dante's dream and those of the grand Vision. These long digressions, which separate the corresponding parts of the work, were designedly inserted, to enable the poet, while speaking in the midst of foes, to be understood by friends only; and to be considered as any thing but what he really was, the singer of the grandeur of the Universal Empire. We have his own words as evidence: "I never speak aught against the Empire; but as I am arguing before adversaries, I am forced to use the greatest caution, that they may have no pretence for troubling the truth. Therefore be not surprised if my digressions are sometimes tedious; for, in a treatise written among enemies, it is impossible to be brief."—(Convito. Treat. 4. ch. 8.)

All Dante's dreams, throughout the Purgatory, have the same object in view, viz.: that of clearing up what follows them. We could easily prove this, by examining each one separately; but that would divert us too far from our main design: we will, therefore, content ourselves with selecting one more instance.

In canto 27, sleep overtakes Dante, and he has a dream, which announces "tidings of future hap." He thought it was the morning hour, when the star shines brightest, "whose orb seems always glowing with the fire of love;" and that he saw Leah (the figure of active life), who conversed with him about Rachael (the figure of contemplative life). He describes the difference of their employments: Leah was gathering flowers for a garland, while Rachael stood before her mirror, gazing at her own image; the one delighting in labour, the other in contemplation.* When he awakes, he finds himself in the

* "There are two kinds of happiness within our reach in this life; and they are both attained by good and safe roads: the one is *active* life, the other is *contemplative* life. The first is excellent; but the last conducts to the very highest happiness and blessing."—(Convito. Tr. 4.)

Earthly Paradise, which he compares to a place in the neighbourhood of Ravenna, where probably a great part of his mystic fictions were planned. He sees, in this blooming Eden, a lady basking in *Love's* own beams; her eyes are as resplendent as those of the *Goddess of Love;* and she goes along the flowery path culling its sweets, and singing on her way "as if enamoured." This is the figurative *active life*, the Leah, whom he saw in his dream; and whom he now, in his waking moments, calls Matilda. In the dream, she talked to him about *contemplative life;* and now she tells him to look and listen for that which is advancing. And who does come? The very same who looks into the eyes of the griffon, *as the sun shines in a mirror:* the *contemplative life*, and *Rachael* of the dream, who becomes the *Beatrice* of the real vision. The first delights to gaze at her own eyes in a mirror; the last looks into the eyes of the griffon as into her own. We might here repeat all those verses which tell us, that in the eyes of Beatrice dwelt *that lord*, because she was enamoured of *herself;* and that there the twofold being shone, "for ever varying; in one figure now reflected, now in other." But why cite these, and a hundred other similar details, when we can read in so many treatises that the head of the sect was anointed with chrism, and called Christ; and that he anointed others after his own image and likeness, and declared them sacred and inviolable also, after the saying of the Psalmist: "Touch not mine anointed." In that chief, and all his images, both sexes were blended; and, in their high ceremonies, each person was presented with two pair of gloves; one for a man, the other for a woman: and with two sticks of sealing-wax, to signify that the two images were in every respect equal; while, to the chief, who was *three in one*, were presented three pair of gloves, and three sticks of sealing-wax. Every sectarian was called an *outward* and an *inward* man: one, all flesh, among the profane; the other, all spirit, among the elect in the

so-called kingdom of God. And to pass from the flesh to the spirit, signified to conform *outwardly* with the prevailing opinions; while, *inwardly*, all was at war with them: and hence the *dead lady*, and the *living man*. This was the ancient art which the Templars brought from Egypt into the West, ages before Dante lived; which deceived the most wary, and served the cause of all who understood how to use it properly. From this Egyptian seminary issued those countless double-faced works, from the splendid poem down to the humblest prose, which peopled the vast region of European literature, and served as well to delight the profane, who read without comprehending them, as to instruct the elect, who meditated upon them in secret.

The sect was then, and still is, divided into two branches, which are called the *active* and the *contemplative* life. Dante calls them also, *practical* and *speculative*. (See the 4th Tr. of the Convito.) And, in Dr. Hemming's work on Masonry, we read, "Of how many branches does Masonry consist? Of two: the *operative* and the *speculative*." These two sectarian lives are figured by two plants; the *laurel* of the *active* Apollo, and the *olive* of the *contemplative* Minerva. Hence, in the degree of secret and sacred Master, the proselyte receives a crown of *laurel* and *olive*, as blending in himself the two characters of *active* and *contemplative* life.* Petrarch seems to have preferred the active sectarian life, from his selection of the *laurel;* and Dante the contemplative life, from his choice of the *olive*, to wreathe round the brows of his lady. (Purg. 30.) And although this last poet treats of both lives in his mystic journey, still, from several passages, both in the poem and in the Convito, we may infer that he gave the preference to the last, or contemplative life.

* "The Master takes a crown of *laurel* and *olives*, and says, My brother, you are now received a *secret Master*." And in the Catechism: "Where were you made a sacred Master? Under the *laurel* and *olive* tree."—(Light on Masonry.)

A very celebrated sectarian, of the last century, wrote an imaginary journey (in imitation of Dante's) to Heaven and Hell; and pretended to have held long conversations with angels and demons. But he treated the matter with so much earnestness and gravity, that he was looked upon as little better than a madman, while he was only a sectarian all the while. He left a collection of enigmatical volumes, in which he treated (like all his predecessors) of the New Jerusalem, and the two different loves. "The essence of God being *love*, it follows that *love is the life* of man; and that *wisdom* is the manner of this love, the existence of man. True love leads to heaven, and its opposite to hell." * This is, in a very great measure, the doctrine which the St. Simonians are now seeking to promulgate. Their creed is throughout interspersed with the words *God* and *love:* and the mysterious and Platonic love of the ancients scarcely differs from this. *They* were more crafty, because more persecuted: the moderns are more bold, because they have not to combat armed power, but established opinions; and their fiercest enemies are contempt and disgust. How do all such vain and absurd theories hide their heads before the light of the ever-blessed Gospel! that sublime gift which Heaven sent to earth for the happiness of us miserable mortal creatures; and for the redemption of our souls from slavery; and whose inestimable benefits we repay by ingratitude towards its Giver—that Great Father of All, who holds out to us the bright promise of an endless felicity!

The two opposite objects of these loves, the rival females, are reduced (as we have already repeatedly shown) into *Rome*, considered in the different aspects of *papal* and *imperial* Rome; Petrarch described it as Carthage and Rome; Dante as Babylon and Jerusalem; and Fazio degli Uberti, the contemporary of Petrarch and the imitator of Dante, made it a lady with two faces, one hea-

* Swedenburg. New Jerusalem, p. 16. 195. Stockholm. 1788.

venly and the other infernal. We may place the work of this last mentioned, side by side with the pilgrimages of Dante, Boccaccio, Frezzi, and Palingenius, and it will give another example of the practice of illustrating one scene by another and preceding one. He was the descendant of a long line of Ghibellines, and was born, lived, and died in exile, the grandson of that renowned Farinata, whom Dante celebrated as the despiser of the "realm of sorrow." The factious hatred of Florence stripped him of his patrimony; and being forced to bury in his own heart the feelings which burnt within him, his poem of the Dittamondo is, if possible, more enigmatical than its great model: and while the outward meaning is expressed, the secret and dangerous sense is, for the most part, left in darkness — a thing to be guessed at. The work, which was never finished, comprises 154 cantos; but for our purpose, a very small part will be sufficient.

B. 1. ch. 11. Title: "The author asks Solinus (his guide) where the earthly Paradise is, and then he sees Rome." Fazio: "Tell me, where is the place whence Adam and Eve were banished? thou hast shown me no traces of it on earth." Solinus: "It is a mount unknown to all, whose summit reaches as high as the first heaven, and whose sides are fanned by the pure air. No cold nor frost, no rain nor cloud ever obscures it, neither does *Fortune* there bestow honours. But the tree of *life* flourishes within it, amidst a perpetual spring-time of lilies, roses, and every other flower, which grows abundantly on the banks of two rivers." These are the waters of oblivion and of memory. After this, appears Rome, personified in her double character. When Fazio sees her he says: "I gaze on *one side*, and thy mien is so noble that I cannot refrain from saying: *Here shine the rays of heaven.* I look on the other, and see thee so vile and so loathsome in thy *black* attire, that my opinion of thee changes to the other extreme." This other extreme is the opposite thought, clear but not *spoken.*

He looked on one side of Rome, and cried: *Here shine the rays of heaven;* he looked on the other and *thought, The darkness of hell is here;* one idea is always expressed, its opposite generally concealed. Rome laments her past greatness, and deplores her present misery, saying that she has been robbed of husband and children, and all that she possessed. Undoubtedly, Fazio here alluded to the very same robber who stole the car of Dante's Beatrice; for Rome says nothing more than this; and yet seems to infer that she has answered Fazio's question: "I have now answered thy question, although perhaps in verses too *dark and mysterious.*"

In the course of this long dialogue, Fazio entreats her to explain how she could have fallen from such honour to such ignominy; and she begins by recalling the *golden age*, when Saturn reigned in Latium, and then gradually brings her history down to the age of Augustus, of whom she says, that had he willed it, she would have worshipped him as Christ is worshipped. She tells him that the gulf into which Curtius sprang was called *hell;* that the trench round her walls was twenty-two miles in circumference; and that the four letters on her standards were explained in three different ways; one of these was the true and known meaning; and of the others, which are in contrast, one related to Christ,

Salva Populum Quem Redemisti;

and the other she refuses to repeat; but we have no great difficulty in asserting that it inferred something of Christ's very opposite.

In short, this poem treats of *Rome* as a person speaking of *Rome* as a city, under two opposite aspects, heavenly and infernal, of which every heavenly quality is expressed, every infernal one darkly hidden. She declares that she was disposed to worship her Emperor as Christ; and she gives the corresponding interpretation to the letters on her banners, concealing the opposite one. She says that

*hell* was within her walls; and she makes the trench round those walls twenty-two miles, exactly the measure of the trench which surrounds Dante's abyss, where the *Pope is Satan.* If we make a slight change in the order of these last words, we shall come to Fazio's opposite interpretation of the four letters.

"Satan Papa Qui Regna." (Satan, the Pope, reigns here.)

We have now traced the dark train of thought which our imagination is left to supply, while the outward sense of the poem is laid bare. Fazio speaks distinctly of Rome as the earthly Paradise, but never mentions its reverse, or *hell;* and so of Rome, the person, and Rome the city. It would require the labour of another Hercules to explain every dark meaning and sentence of this writer; and, therefore, we now take our leave of him, saying: Abide there in thy *dark and mysterious verses*, which, to those who are read in the mysteries of thy school, are both open and clear; and to those who call *thee* ingenuous and *us* visionary, we say with him, who well knew how to beguile them; "You see little, thinking to see much."*—(Petr.)

* Had Fazio been forced to give the third interpretation, he might easily have selected one from among the numberless popular readings of the four letters on the Roman standard; the following are but a few among them. In the Capitol, where there is still a stone remaining, with this inscription on it, dwelt some Franciscans of *Ara Cœli*. A simple countryman once presented four new cheeses to one of the friars, as a reward for some great service received; and thinking to show his wit, he wrote one of the four letters on each cheese. The friar, with a sneer at the meanness of the present, asked him what the letters signified; and the other replied,

"Sono Preziose Queste Ricotte."

"I thought," said the friar, "that they might mean"—

"Sono Poche Quattro Ricotte."

A crowd of pilgrims were once, in the time of a jubilee, entering Rome, with a large banner borne before them, on which were written the same four

letters. A wag demanded what those letters had to do with a pilgrimage; to which they answered: —

"Supplices Peregrini Quærimus Romam."

The other, who exercised his wit on all persons of their class, replied: —

"Stultus Populus Quærit Romam."

One of the antiquities of Rome, turned into a house of public entertainment, still bore the same letters on a ruined arch. One day, while some young men were seated before a table, drinking and conversing together, an itinerant poet, poor and thirsty, came up, and asked one of them: "Is it true that those letters mean

"Si Potum Quæris, Recipe?"

"Friend," said the youth, "the publican says that they should be read,

"Sine Pecunia, Quis Recreabitur?"

Finally, it is said, that they comprise a question and an answer, which expresses that the Popes themselves cannot forbear laughing, when they find themselves raised to a dignity which they so little deserve. The answer transposes the letters.

*q.* "Sancte Pater, Quid Rides?"
*a.* "Rideo Quod Papa Sum."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### INTERNAL ESSENCE OF DANTE'S POEM, AS DEVELOPED IN THE SECOND PART.

WHOEVER enters into the secret spirit of the Italian literature of earlier ages, and reflects on its abundance, must feel how wide the difference is between our ancient and modern poetry. The first, ever the active champion of the public cause, contained, beneath the outward charms of verse, ideas fraught with deep meaning; and under the veil of love, aroused even the inert to sentiments of patriotism and freedom; while the last is the feeble offering of private indolence, which, with its tepid sentimentality, deadens the energies of the most stirring. But the cause of this falling off is to be sought rather in the changes which time brings with it, than in any variation of individual talent. Not only in Italy, but throughout Europe, literature has undergone a process of transformation. In ancient times, even fables were a species of chronicles, which carried down the recollections of secret deeds; while our modern ones convey, at best, some trite moral which we know by heart, without the trouble of reading them. Formerly history was written in the style of a romance, but no important event was left untold; while now, on the contrary, romances are intermixed with historical sketches, which, after all, af-

ford but very superficial information. In general, our ancient literature may be compared with that taught by the first rulers and priests of nations; and it is full of the secret science derived from them. This is the case with Dante, whose poem is the grand depository of the mystic doctrine possessed by the school to which he belonged. The title given to it, *Commedia*, which some have ridiculed, others defended, and the author himself excused, conveys an hieroglyphic meaning which we shall, in another place, explain, with the help of the mysterious alphabet which has fortunately descended to us. In other words, Dante's poem is a disguised paraphrase of the Revelations, written in the same allegorical language, but applied to a political design. To the generality of readers, this language is an enigma; but the very small number who can read it in its double sense, and enter into the spirit of a volume, which is written *within and without* in imitation of Ezekiel and St. John, have thereby entered the *realm of spirits*, and can comprehend works without number, which differ from each other in nothing but the title. Allegorically speaking: He who once breaks the seven seals of this fast-closed volume, may afterwards open every seal imposed by the jealous order who forged them, and enter into the knowledge of things which the wise man is not permitted to manifest openly.

Besides preliminary subjects, the Apocalypse may be divided into three grand scenic pictures: 1st, of the world, corrupted by Babylon; 2nd, of the judgment and punishment of Babylon; 3rd, of the New Jerusalem which succeeded that corrupt city. And into three corresponding parts did Dante divide his paraphrase — Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The second part then, or Purgatory, contains the condemnation of Babylon and her ruler, pronounced by the mystic New Jerusalem in the person of its head; and let us remember that Dante has declared that the allegorical part of his poem is *con-*

*tracted*, with a view to show us that, if we would understand, we must unfold it.

As far back as the very first canto of the Comedy, he throws out a hint of the universal judgment, which he always intended to be a luminous point in his picture, by saying, that the wolf would be destroyed by a greyhound;* who, full of love, wisdom and virtue, would be the salvation of Italy, and would chase the wolf from every city until he had driven her into hell, whence she had originally come to plague the nations by her insatiable voracity. The same final event is anticipated at the end of canto 6, at the beginning of the 10th, in the 13th, 29th, &c. &c. And again, in the second part of the poem, in canto 1., he speaks of Cato, and says that he is to come in the last day with bright shining vestments; and the importance of this expression will be felt, when we remind our readers that Cato is a figure of God. Towards the end of the Convito, he writes: "Marcia turned to Cato as the noble soul turns to God. And was ever mortal man more fit to represent God than Cato? — Never."

Petrarch calls Laura, with her hair of *gold*, teeth of *pearl*, and cheeks of *scarlet*, *a dress;* and so she was in truth; a dress artfully woven, and thrown over one whom he feared to show undisguised. And elsewhere, writing of the same Laura, he speaks out still more plainly as to whom this dress concealed. "Even as a *lady*, under a plain garb, conceals a living man." As Laura is a dress which shrouds *a living man*, so Beatrice is the vesture of Cato, which, on the great day, is to be

* Many persons (and we among the number), deceived by an equivocal expression, imagined that the *greyhound* was a figure of *Cane* della Scala, and thereby greatly injured the unity of the poem; since the greyhound is the enemy of the wolf, her judge and punisher; and the *heir of the Roman eagle* who was to conquer and condemn the usurper of his rights. We acknowledge how much more correct was the judgment of the ancient interpreters on this passage.

bright; that is to say, a web cast over a man who is called a god. And we shall show that these are no extravagant theories of our own invention, but the cunning devices of the undiscovered Platonic love.

Throughout the whole course of the mystic purgations, this final day is often mentioned, and, at the end of them, we find that those who first enter paradise are the allegorical lovers who are purified by *fire* (in opposition to the *ice* in which Lucifer is bound). Among these, Dante sees Guido Guinizelli, the famous partisan of Manfred, Frederic the Second's son, and holds a dialogue with him, which is entirely allegorical. He calls him the father of the Italian bards of love; and the other, in return, envies him because he is going "to the cloister where Christ is abbot of the college." After this, a voice cries to those travellers, who are on their way to the terrestrial paradise, bidding them not be deaf to what they will hear beyond the fire. Let us profit by this hint, given to those who were versed in the secret jargon. Dante, eager to behold Beatrice, cast himself into the flame, and passed through; and immediately he heard a voice say, "Come, blessed of my father." On referring to the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, whence those words are taken, we find that it treats at length of the last judgment, when the Son of man is to come to judge the living and the dead, that is, the good and the bad. "Then shall the *king* say to them on his *right hand*, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, &c. Then shall he say unto them on his *left hand*, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." After hearing the voice, the traveller enters the earthly paradise, the symbol of the blessing of this life, produced by a good emperor; and the first object he meets there, is a lady, the figurative active life, basking in love's beam. She tells him that, if he reads the psalm *Delectasti*, his mind will be enlightened, and he will see why

she is so cheerful; and, if we refer to that psalm, our own minds will be illuminated likewise. It is the fifth of the penitential psalms; and, because it treats of the last judgment and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, Dante adapted it to the entry of Henry into Italy. (See ch. 12.) After sending us to meditate on this psalm, the allegorical lady goes on to say, that the terrestrial paradise in which she is, was recorded by the ancient poets who sang the golden age (declared by Dante to signify the age of Augustus); and then she begins to sing, like a person enamoured, "Blessed is he whose sin is covered." This is the second of the penitential psalms translated by Dante: "Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. I will acknowledge my sin unto thee; and mine unrighteousness have I not hid.* For this shall every one that is godly† make his prayers unto thee." (Ps. xxxii.)

The figure next says, "Brother, look and listen:" and he does look, and sees the judge coming in triumph, as a female, seated on a splendid car, and escorted by all his angels. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." (St. Matthew, ch. xxv.) The whole may be described in the very words of the Revelations. "And thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged; and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth." (ch. xi. v. 18.) "Fear God, for the hour of his judgment is come" (ch. xiv. v. 7.); and then comes he whom Dante calls God. (The poet in this place refers us to Ezekiel as well as to St. John: "But read

* Alluding to Dante's confession to Beatrice.

† This alludes to the prayers of the angels for Dante, while Beatrice is judging him.

Ezekiel" — "John is with me;" and that prophet is explicit on the same subject. "Behold I am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations." (ch. v. v. 8.) "I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations." (ch. vii. v. 3.) These threats are uttered against that wicked prince whom Dante calls Lucifer, who sat in the seat of the Lord and polluted his sanctuaries.) The august procession is described as follows: — First appear seven golden candlesticks, and, in the midst of them, one like unto the Son of man, clothed in a garment which reaches to his feet, that is to say, in the dress of a female.* Before him go twenty-four elders and four beasts.† His throne is compared with the triumphal cars of Augustus and Scipio, who vanquished the enemies of Rome; and, as soon as the whole cortège is in sight, a hundred voices cry, Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh;‡ the very words sang when our Lord entered Jerusalem to clear the Temple of the buyers and sellers who profaned it; as —

> "At the last audit
> So the blest shall rise, from forth his cavern each
> Uplifting lightly his new-vested flesh —"

So the ministers and messengers of life eternal sing round the glorious car.

Then follows Dante's trial before the judgment seat of Beatrice. The penitent confesses his crime, and indeed in vain would he have attempted to deny it, for,

> Da *Tal* Giudice sassi.

Such a judge must have detected him. His judgment figures the verdict against every one who had been en-

* See Rev. ch. i.
† Rev. ch. xix. v. 4.
‡ St. Matthew, ch. xxi. v. 9.

ticed away by the same *wicked one;* and he centres the whole catalogue of sinners in himself, not so much because he had once been a Guelph, as because he represents himself as being alone during the entire scene, and therefore obliged to bear the burden. "Turning me at the sound of mine own name, which here I am compelled to register." (Purg. 30.)

After this, comes the vision of her who stole and poisoned the mystic car; and then the prophetic judgment against the *prince of this world:* "Know that the vessel which the serpent broke was and is not." The vessel is the car, and the serpent Satan himself. The Revelations supply Dante's half-finished hints: "The beast whom thou sawest was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder . . . when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth, and there are seven kings: these shall make war on the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings."* The judge makes use of our Saviour's words: "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again, a little while and ye shall see me;" and if we turn to St. John's Gospel, in the 16th chapter, where they are written, we shall find that the *prince of this world* is judged by Christ. The mystic Beatrice prophecies that the eagle will not always be without an heir: going on to say: "Plainly I view, and therefore speak, the stars e'en now approaching, whose conjunction brings on a season, in the which *one* sent from God shall slay the giant; *five hundred, five* and *ten* do mark him out." Let us repeat these numbers in Roman letters.

Un cinquecento dieci, e cinque.

I D X E V

† Rev. ch. xvii.

We shall find the real meaning of these cyphers, by taking the letters from each side of the centre in the following order :—

I V D E X

The just and avenging *Judge* is that King of kings called, who is to pronounce sentence on the living and the dead in the day of judgment. Those who adopted the reading of D X V were obliged to make a transposition of the letters, before they could form the word D V X; and they seem to have been ignorant that the secret rules of the school taught how such words might be arranged, not only by disposing letters, but syllables into certain forms.

After the prophetic announcement, that the judge, the heir of the eagle and messenger from God, will destroy the robber of the car, the mystic lady bids Dante take heed to teach her words to those who are pursuing the paths which lead to death, and when he *writes them*, to declare that he has seen the *plant which is so twisted.* This injunction is plainly given in reference to the *word* which we have explained above.

In the Monarchia, which opens the heart of the poem, the question is gravely discussed, which of the two ought to be the *judge,* the Emperor or the Pope ? and the poet not daring to decide openly, resorted to a similar play on letters, for the understanding of those who could arrange them ; and wrote down, as if by chance, the name of a certain Emperor Decius, leaving his readers to wonder whom he could mean. We will quote the passage, in which he speaks of the two offices, viz. the papal and the imperial : " Being relative terms, if they are mutually subjected to each other, they may be reduced to one ; viz. judge (Judicem). The Pope is not Decius (I V D E C S) the Emperor, but vice versa." We all know that X is a double letter, composed of C S.

What punishment is reserved for the Pope in the judg-

ment day? the very same assigned to Satan in the Revelations; in ch. xix. we read of the punishment of Babylon; and in ch. xx. an angel "laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him." Dante saw the Pope chained and bound, hand and foot; and declared him to be the *servant* of the Lord, and his creature; that is, created by him a prince and vicar, and hence called, ambiguously, Christ's Vicar. Let us open the 19th canto of the Purgatory, and disinter the buried mystery it contains.

After Dante has seen the two rivals, objects of the different loves, in his dream, and discovered, through the blessed One, all the infamy of her antagonist; and after Virgil, who was sent, at the command of the first, to deliver him from the last, has assured him that he shall see that adorable person on the mount; they begin to ascend, and they soon come to where several spirits are lying extended on the ground. Virgil, intent on leading Dante to the summit, asks the spirits to direct them to the mountain's top: and one of them answers; If you are sure of not falling under our punishment, and desire to find the way to the highest point, "see that ye still to rightward keep the brink." Dante desires much to know who this spirit was; and turning to Virgil, he sees an assenting smile on his countenance. He then speaks to the spirit, who tells him that his soul is bound to the stony pavement on which he is lying; that he was the *successor of Peter;* and judged by the Lord to remain thus bound and chained, hand and foot, until his good pleasure, for the crime of avarice. And we, who know who this Lord is, see plainly the nature of the criminal as well as that of the judge; and that the same punishment is decreed to him that is awarded to the Satan of the Revelations, after the destruction of Babylon. And here begins Dante to ridicule, with feigned respect, the pontifical dignity. He bends the knee before the spirit, who checks him, saying: Why bend the knee to me? Rise, brother, mistake not:

we are all servants of a sovereign power. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me: See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren." (Rev. xix. 10.) The malicious Ghibelline refers us to this chapter of the Apocalypse, and why? because it describes the *woman* already judged and condemned. The spirit continues: If you have ever marked that holy Gospel voice, which says, "nor shall be given in marriage," you will understand my words. Those words are in St. Luke, ch. xx., where we read that the chief priests went out with a design to tempt Christ with artful questions; but that our Lord confounded them completely with his parable of the vineyard, which plainly figured their own certain fate. The vineyard is the church; themselves, the husbandmen; and for their impious wickedness, which carries them even to the murder of their lord's beloved son, what punishment awaits them? "He shall come and destroy these labourers, and shall give his vineyard to others." Farther on, in the same chapter, our Lord reproves his tempters, saying: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's." And again: "Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers. The same shall receive greater damnation." These are the passages for which Dante referred us to this chapter. In the Convito, he says that we should obey the Lord, and not the servant. "If the king commands one thing, and the servant another, we must not obey the servant, for then we shall disobey the king, and thereby transgress." And again, in the Canzone, "Doglia mi reca," he cries, in bitterness: "This servant-lord, is froward, and the eyes which enlighten the mind, are closed for him." No sooner had he left the presence of that ser-

vant, to whom he knelt in homage, than he exclaims :—

> " Accurst be thou,
> Inveterate wolf! whose gorge ingluts more prey
> Than every beast beside, yet is not fill'd,
> So bottomless thy maw! Ye spheres of heaven!
> To whom there are, as seems, who attribute
> All change in mortal state, *when is the day*
> *Of his appearing*, for whom fate reserves
> To chase her hence?"

that is, when will the heir of the eagle come, that I V D E X who is to destroy the wolf? The heaven whom he apostrophises here, is not the heaven to which we pray, but that where shone the *New Sun* of our Adam, whence he looked for the happy change in his mortal state.

Here we may stop to notice one of those mystical concords of numbers with which Dante delighted to connect the three parts of his work. He warns the sectarian reader, (feigning to speak of other things,) that the superior part of the poem illustrates the inferior part; and begs him to bear this hint constantly in mind. And elsewhere he tells him, that all the verses are secretly numbered, to guide him to the inward sense. We quote his own words:

> " Thus do these organs of the world proceed,
> As thou beholdest now, from *step to step*,
> Their influences *from above* deriving,
> And thence transmitting *downwards*. *Mark me well:*
> How, through *this passage to the truth*, I ford
> *The truth thou lovest;* that thou henceforth, alone,
> May'st know to keep the shallows safe, untold."—(Par. 2.)
>
> " *Were further space allow'd*,
> Then, reader! might I sing, though but in part,
> That beverage, with whose sweetness I had ne'er
> Been sated. But, *since all the leaves are full*,
> *Appointed for this second strain*, mine art
> With warning bridle checks me."—(Purg. 33.)

Now, counting the verses of the poem, one period making 930, and the other 4302, we find that he described,

in the first number, the day he spent in purgatory; and, in the second, the time which elapsed between his descent into the infernal regions and his resurrection to a new life, by the mysteries of the seven symbolic stars; saying that Adam saw the sun return 930 times while he was on earth; and that, from his death to his resurrection to life eternal, the sun had made 4302 times his annual course. Thus identifying the true Adam, who fixed the language of man, with the figurative Adam who reformed the jargon, or *new sun.** Enough of the same kind of agreement will be seen, when we show the Vita Nuova and the Convito side by side with the Comedy; and when we prove, beyond all doubt, the connexion between the mysteries of the sect and those of the poem. One more example will suffice for the present.

In what chapter of the Revelations is Babylon's condemnation inscribed? In the 19th. And between the 19th canto of the Inferno, the 19th of the Purgatory, and the 19th of the Paradise, there is the strictest possible connexion; and, in all, an evident allusion to that same condemnation. Dante has desired us to follow his steps, if we would know the truth: *from above*, therefore, let us begin, and follow him from *step to step downwards.* In the Paradise, he says, that those hypocrites who cry Christ, Christ, will, at the judgment-day, be sent far away from his presence. In the Purgatory, he tells us who these are who thus cry, while leading a life of vice and falsehood. In the Hell, we read, that they will be banished to the earth's centre, where Christ's enemy sits on the waters; because that is the lowest and darkest place, and the most remote from heaven. (Inf. 9.)

* Adam presides over the high sectarian degree, where they give the *keys* of the jargon, and reveal all the mysteries. It is called the degree of the *key*, or of *the sun*, or of *the eagle*. "*The key* of Masonry, philosophical lodge, knights adepts of the *eagle* or *sun*. The Grand Master, or Thrice Puissant, is named *Father Adam.*"—(See Light on Masonry. p. 253. Utica. 1829.)

19. Paradise, terz. 36.

" But, lo! of those
Who call 'Christ, Christ,' there shall be many found,
In judgment, further off from him by far
Than such to whom his name was never known."

19. Purg. terz. 36.

" Late, alas!
Was my conversion; but, when I became
Rome's pastor, I discern'd at once the dream
And cozenage of life."

19. Hell, terz. 36.

" Of shepherds like to you, th' Evangelist
Was 'ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,
———————————— he beheld."

And there, upon the waters, sits Satan, motionless, and bound fast, in a frozen lake, by that Spirit who thus amply revenges the persecutions he has borne so long.* The Christ of the Paradise tells us, in terms too explicit to be mistaken, who is the Antichrist of the Hell; and we read, after the above-cited terzina, in the superior part of the poem, a minute account of the Last Judgment.

" When that the two assemblages shall part;
One, rich, eternally—the other, poor;—
When they shall see that volume, in the which
All their dispraise is written, spread to view."

Dante's design may be explained in a few words: In the central part of his great work, the Judgment, as pronounced by the mystic Judge, clothed in the female garb of *Justice;* who rewards the good and punishes the wicked; called, in allegorical language, the *living* and the *dead*, as well as the symbolic paradise and hell; are all relative

* " And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him," &c.—(Rev. ch. xx.)

to *this* life, and not to futurity. He distinctly tells us so, in his letter to Can Grande; and repeats the same again in the Monarchia: "The allegorical subject of the whole work is *man;* who, deserving, according to the actions of his free-will, either reward or punishment, is *judged* by them; and this is the subject which is *contracted.* The end and aim of the work is to release the living *in this life* from a state of misery, and bring them to a state of happiness."—(Letter to Can Grande.)

"The world is happiest when *Justice* reigns triumphant. Hence Virgil, desiring to celebrate the age which seemed in his time approaching, sang:

"Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna."

The *Virgin* is *Justice,* called also *Astrea;* and the kingdom of Saturn signifies those happy days which were known as *the Golden Age. Justice* is only powerful under a monarchy; and it is inherent in a prince who can and will do good: none but a monarch will thus act. Therefore only under one sole monarch can justice flourish in this world. *Free-will* is the first principle of liberty; it is the highest boon granted by God to mankind; and mankind is truly free only under the sway of one Monarch."—(De Monarchia. B. 1. p. 17.)

Without quoting more of these scholastic cavillings, we may assert, without fear of contradiction, that this female figure (who judges in *Dante,* a type of corrupt man; and condemns the *woman* as a type of the corrupting power,) is an emblem of the *justice* of the Emperor of the Universe; who, as the New Jerusalem, condemns the impious Babylon. And we abide by this assertion, notwithstanding that some still adhere to the opinion that this judge, or Beatrice, was a Florentine lady. The daughter of Folco, and wife of Simon de' Bardi, judging and condemning the Pope for the crime of stealing her car! What unaccountable pertinacity!

We have seen that Dante's two long pilgrimages,

through the deep valley of the condemned, and up the steep mountain of purgatory; among demons and angels, emblems and figures; were both undertaken for one final object, viz.: his lady. She is the beginning and end of the poem; *she* sent Virgil to deliver him from the wolf, in the dark forest; *she* despatched the same Virgil to save him from the wicked female of his dream; and to her he is led at the last, safe from both wolf and woman. Now let us examine what constituted Dante's crime in her eyes, when she cited him to appear before her judgment-seat. In the first place, she requires him, ere he can hope for pardon, to weep for his crime;

> "that the sorrow now
> May equal the transgression."

And as his grief is extreme, we must suppose that his error was great. Let us hear its exact extent from herself. She tells the assembled angels that, in his *new life*, he was so gifted, that good habits would have made him something wonderful; but that, as rich and healthy grouud may be, by poisonous seeds, rendered a desert, so did it happen to him. "I upheld him for some time in the right path, by showing him my youthful *eyes;* but when I reached my second age, and changed my life,* he left me for another. When I had become *spirit from flesh*,† and increased in beauty and virtue, I was still less dear to him. The decree of God would be broken, were he to pass Lethe without weeping for such a crime." Then, turning to Dante, she adds: "Listen, and hear how my buried flesh should have had power to influence thee. Neither nature nor art ever showed thee aught more beautiful than the form which is now dust. Therefore, when I died to thee, nothing mortal should have had power to tempt thee;

* When she passed from active to contemplative life, or from flesh to spirit.

† In the Convito, he maintains the superiority of the contemplative life.

thou shouldst have followed me." This was Dante's crime; and how could the daughter of Messer Folco ever forgive it? What unpardonable inconstancy! Love another, after she had died, and had become dust and ashes! And, still worse, continue to love, when she had thrown off a fleshly for a spiritual nature, and thereby increased in beauty and virtue! How could he do less than go through hell and purgatory; and climb the steep mountain, and present himself as a criminal, with the certainty of being judged, and most severely condemned, for so deep a sin? And Beatrice, too, who came from heaven to earth, with all the figurative books of the holy Scriptures!—But let us not jest on things so sacred: we only say, with all our respect for Dante, that nothing can be more miserable and ridiculous than the literal object of his allegorical pilgrimage. He describes two journeys: one taken by a gentleman, who leaves the face of the earth, and travels down to the bottom of hell, whence he speeds up again to the Mount of Eden; the other by a lady, who comes down from heaven to earth, in a car drawn by a griffon, and escorted by an august procession. And for what? to meet at a given point, and quarrel like lovers without any real cause; the lady rebuking her admirer because he loved another after her death! No: we are not now to be deceived by the words of this allegorical lady. We know that, in the double Toulousan baptism, which the Florentine Dante received from Statius of Toulouse, men died and were born again; that is, became spirit from flesh, by a figurative and profane application of our Lord's words in St. John, ch. iii.: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." We know that in that kingdom (so called,) a mystic rite took place, in which they did die flesh, and rose again spirit, to begin a new life; and that this new birth still exists in almost every sect.

Immediately after his birth, the neophyte is said to be *three years* old; and this number increases in proportion

to the successive degrees. When he reaches nine years, he is allowed to see the symbols, and hear them explained; and this is called, Beholding the light. This light is figured in a female, of whom the neophyte is declared the lover; and hence, in the Vita Nuova, Dante writes that he was *nine years old* when he fell in love with the *lady of his mind;* and as this lady was nothing more substantial than an *idea*, it is very clear why Beatrice was of the same tender age as her lover when first they met. The same fiction was adopted by Sannazarius, in his Arcadia, where Carmosina follows the example of Beatrice, Laura, Fiammetta, and all the other ladies of the mind, and dies before her lover.

Apuleius, describing his initiation into the Egyptian mysteries, narrates that, after *he had touched the gates of death*, and the *interior courts of the queen of eternal woe*, (exactly Dante's case,) he returned to life, and *then celebrated the happy day of his birth.* And Lenoir here annotates: "The initiated, after this ceremony, are supposed to be born again, and to put on *a new life.*"—(Ant. de la Fr. Maçon. p. 253.) "The fables which describe Bacchus, Orpheus, Hercules, Theseus, Ulysses, Eneas, (and, we may add, Dante,) descending into hell, and then returning to earth again, appear to signify that those persons were *regenerate*, according to the Roman system."—(Ant. Dev. v. i. p. 386.) This *new life* is the *Vita Nuova* of Dante; and it is most surprising how so many learned persons can have gone on, for ages, speculating on the real nature of his works, and still never have entertained the least suspicion that this enigmatical Vita Nuova has a reference to those sects which, in figurative language, describe their proselytes as rising to a new life. All, who have read the book, must have felt its obscurity; but they have glanced over it carelessly, without troubling themselves to inquire into the reasons which induced Dante to write so darkly, when speaking of a new life; or why he addressed himself to those only *who*

*could understand him;* or, finally, why he called his work by such a title at all.

To show how this new birth took place in the sects of antiquity, we shall make use of the mysteries of the Templars, who first introduced into Europe the practices of the Egyptian priests, on which were founded the rites of every sect, ancient and modern. We have already examined that part of Boccaccio's Comedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine, which describes the ceremony of the new birth. Not less clear is the description of the same ceremony in the Quadriregio, (B. 2. ch. 6). The author, after being instructed how the soul is united to the body, hears, *at the first hour of the day*, which way he must go, if he desire to see the sun. He accordingly goes to an aperture, and, first, he puts his head through, and then his whole body; after which, he falls suddenly down as if lifeless.

In that ancient sectarian book, which was attributed to St. Augustine (designedly, because the Templars were Augustines,) and called "Il Monte dell' Orazione," (Florence 1524), the allegorical person called *Lo Spoglia*, who leads the neophyte to *Renovamini*, makes him pass through a narrow crevice, from which he issues *as though just born;* and in the catechism of the first degree of that sect which claims a descent from the Templars, it is written: Q. "In what state did you enter the house of the Sun and Moon?" A. "As pure as a new-born infant, and as flexible as wax." (Les Francs-Maçons, &c. Amsterdam, 1774). The same idea is conveyed in other similar works, which we have examined. Two consequences followed this new birth: 1st, The past was forgotten entirely; and 2dly, The memory was prepared for the new science. Both these things were accomplished by mystic ceremonies; and as abstract and mental ideas are, in these secret rites, converted into human actions; so these two mental operations, the forgetfulness of *evil*, and the remembrance of *good*, were performed by two different immersions and

two mystic potions, taken by the neophyte; that of oblivion and that of memory; which ceremonies were practised in the mysteries of Eleusis and in those of the cave of Trophonius, &c. all derived from Egypt. "Those who went to this oracle (of the cave of Trophonius), after some preparatory ceremonies, bathed in the river Ercino, and then drank from two fountains: first, from the fountain of oblivion, to forget the past; and then from the fountain of memory, to carry away in their minds all that the oracle had told them."* These ceremonies will remind us, that Dante first drank of the waters of Lethe, and then from those of Eunoe, when accompanied by the Toulousan, Beatrice's delegate; and from all that we can collect from the books of these secret societies, we have every reason to believe that both the immersions and the potions are to this day in use among them. Dante describes his own resuscitation to a new life, in the grand scene which we are in this chapter examining. After he has taken the draught of *Oblivion*, Matilda the Roman, and Statius the Toulousan lead him to the second stream viz., that of *Memory*, in order to revive his fainting virtue; after which he rejoins the lady of his mind, *the light and glory of mankind*, "by whom the human species excels every thing contained within the heaven of the moon," (Inf. 2), and he declares in doing so, that he was *regenerated, renewed*, as *new* plants put on *new* leaves, by the influence of the holy waters; and that he felt all pure and fit to mount to the *stars*. (See Purg. 33). These *stars* signify the seven degrees of the sect, which when personified, declared "Here we are nymphs, and in heaven *stars*," and with this last mysterious word he finished each of the parts of his poem; under the influence of that sectarian love which gave an impulse both to the language and the degrees, or as he called them the *Sun* and the *Stars*. The two mystic operations which constitute the essence of

* See Cartari. Immag. degli Dei antichi, p. 90. Venice 1571.

initiation into the secrets of the sect are *purification* and *manifestation* which relate strictly to the two above-mentioned potions: the past being *evil* is to be forgotten by a *purification* of the memory, the present being *good* is to be engraven on the mind by a *manifestation*; "Purification is always a mournful ceremony, whether we look upon it as commemorative or figurative: the figurative, in feigning first to *kill*, feigns afterwards to give a *new life*, and thus this action, mournful in itself, finally becomes regenerative." (Ant. Dev. B. 1. chap. 4.) Hence in that sectarian degree in which the man *dies* and is *born again*, they *weep* and *laugh*; and hence the mystic scene in which, after his judgment, Dante is plunged into the waters, and drinks of the two potions, begins in *sadness* and ends in *joy*. In the holy ceremony of baptism, the neophyte promises to *renounce Satan*, which promise carries with it the forgetfulness of the past *or the death of the old man;* all the writings of St. Paul are interspersed with figurative expressions of this nature, and those who are always on the watch to assail the doctrines of our faith have not failed to build the most absurd theories on this apostle's words. *Manifestation* was performed in two ways; either by offering the proselyte significant symbols, or by explaining their meaning to him through the Hierophant. The first ceremony always preceded the last; that is, *ocular* inspection preceded *oral* instruction. These were called in the jargon the *eyes* and the *mouth* of Madonna, and they constituted the *first* and *second* beauty of the lady of the mind. The Vita Nuova and the Convito are filled with descriptions of these two beauties, and the grand scene in the poem where Dante meets his lady, is equally employed in dwelling upon them. In the heavenly paradise, the eyes of Madonna increase in brilliancy in the eyes of her lover, sphere by sphere, and this, together with her conversations with him, are expressive of the development of the before

mentioned theory of the *eyes* and *mouth*. We may briefly show this, by a selection from the scene of the meeting.

> "Turn Beatrice!" was their song: "Oh! turn
> Thy saintly *sight* on this thy faithful one,
> Who, to behold thee, many a wearisome pace
> Hath measured."

These are almost the very words addressed to Isis in the manifestation of the Egyptian mysteries: "O Isis! give thy spirit to thy new servant, who to see thee has overcome so many dangers, and exposed himself to so many trials" (Apuleius); and Isis, male and female in one, gave her spirit to her servant, as Beatrice gave hers to the faithful one. The nymph-stars proceed to ask the lady who has already shown her *first beauty* in symbols: "We pray thee graciously unveil to him thy mouth, that he may see the second beauty which thou hidest." "O splendour of *light eternal!*" cries the votary, and then immediately follows the manifestation of the lady, *light eternal* to her lover; and in what does it consist? In an exposition of the deceptive language of holiness. She teaches him in what sense he is to understand *Heaven* and *God*, and their opposite figures; she tells him that she is a male and female in one (like the Egyptian Isis); and that he having received her spirit, is in every respect like herself; and finally, she explains to him what is meant by Christ and the church, male and female, and how their union takes place in the person of the votary; and so in the Vita Nuova, and so in the Convito; and yet, although in all these three works, the author speaks precisely in the same terms of these *eyes* and *mouth*, or this first and second beauty of her whom he defines to be the *glorious lady of his mind*, and *his soul*, and *light*, the daughter of the Emperor of the universe; no writer seems to have discovered the intimate connection which exists between the three, nor suspected that the poem might be a figurative development of the theory of the *eyes* and *mouth*, nor inquired why he could not speak of the lady of his mind

openly. Many have written that Dante's love for Beatric was Platonic, and all the writers on Platonic Love declare it to be a holy mystery, and informs us that in it man is considered a compound of male and female; and still none have guessed that the Platonic love of Dante for his lady was a similar mystery. A now existing secret sect which boasts, and with reason, of its antiquity, divides man equally into male and female, by a sacred mystery, and its writers assure us that in the third heaven human intellect is figured as a lady; a friend and correspondent of Dante wrote in a poem which was condemned as heretical, these words: "I am in the *third heaven; transformed into this lady; my intellect assumed her form; therefore I am she*"—and still none can see that Dante, who placed Beatrice in this third heaven, was *transformed into her* and *assumed her form* likewise. This society uses, in its secret *manifestation, sealing wax*, to signify that the lady of the mind is stamped on the brain of the initiated, and Dante tells his lady in the manifestation we are now examining:

> "As wax by seal, that changeth not
> Its impress, now is stamped my brain by thee." (Purg. 33.)

In the same secret society, they take a mysterious voyage, and return with a staff entwined with palm, alluding to the palmers, who are so called because they go beyond seas, there where they gather the palm (Vita Nuova); and the lady of the mind tells Dante "I desire that thou take it painted into thee, for the cause that one brings home his staff inwreathed with palm." Finally, to signify the completeness of instruction, the Sectarians say, that the sun has reached its meridian; and Dante in his manifestation, says, that

> —— the sun possessed
> The circle of mid-day.

What wonder, then, if those who knew all this by communication, as we know it after long meditation, what

wonder, we say, if they claim Dante as a brother, and declare his work to be a collection of sectarian figures.

Having thus far analyzed the grand allegorical scene which is at the end of the second part of the poem, we now proceed to conclude our examination with a brief notice of the beginning and progression of it, as relating to the secret initiation. The allegorical pilgrim arrives in Purgatory (canto 9), and his guide points out to him the gate. As they draw near to it, they see the guard, who carries two emblematic keys and a naked sword in his hand;* and this guard gives Dante the instructions needful to enable him to proceed safely into the interior: he warns him particularly not to *look behind him* after he has once entered (that is, not to think of the past, because the profane man is then *dead* in him) —

> "Enter, but this warning hear;
> He forth again departs, who looks behind."

As the door turns on its hinges, which are of sounding metal, it grates loudly and harshly upon his ear; but, as soon as he enters within it, he hears sweet sounds of song. The gate shuts after him with a loud crash, and he, remembering the advice he had received, is careful not to look round. All this agrees perfectly with the ancient ceremonies of initiation, as they are described in several works, and especially in the French romance called *Le Sethos*, which contains all of them. "The neophyte arrived at a gate which has two sides of brass; these opened, and, as they closed together again, by some trick which was contrived *in the hinges*, they sent forth a loud noise which seemed to echo through some vast building. He then heard in the distant arcades the voices of men and women blending together, and forming a delicious harmony. He read over an arch these words: Whoever follows this path, without looking be-

* In all the rituals of the secret society, the porter carries a naked sword in his hand.

hind him, will be purified; and he was warned by the porters to walk on without turning his head." (Sethos, B. 3.) The same warning was given to Orpheus, but he disregarded it, and Eurydice, the *symbol of his soul*, his *female half*, was lost *from ill-affection*. Dante observed the injunction, and Beatrice was his own. After he had passed through, he says:

> "When we had passed the threshold of the gate,
> (Which *the soul's ill-affection* doth disuse,*
> Making the crooked seem the straighter path),
> I heard its closing sound. Had mine eyes turn'd,
> For that offence what plea might have avail'd?
> We mounted up the *riven rock*.—
> 'Here some little art
> Behoves us,' said my leader,"

the same who taught him *so many arts*, and who was sent by Beatrice to deliver him from the she-wolf *by his flowery speech*. Dante, the neophyte, and Virgil the conductor, proceed up the riven rock,† but so slowly that

> "With cleft orb
> The moon once more o'erhangs her wat'ry couch."

"Behold the bed beneath thy feet," says his guide in another place (canto 12.), and, looking down, he sees the stone he treads on engraven with examples of humbled pride. And by the stings of remembrance wa-

* *The ill-affection of the soul.* This is a deceitful and equivocal expression. The action of Orpheus, in turning to gaze on Eurydice, *makes the crooked path seem straight*. We must not forget that all former thoughts were to be forgotten: hence the warning given not to turn back, hence the drinking of Oblivion's waters.

† "What did you find? — A rock which cannot be climbed. How did you ascend it? — By means of words: my words opened the bosom of the rock. What do you mean by the bosom of the rock? — Its centre (the inward sense). What did you find on your way? — A new heaven, a new earth, new people, and a new way of walking, like the planets in the firmament." (Catec. of Initiation, Les Franc. Maç., p. 234.)

kened, which none but the pious ever feel (and the remembrance of his own sad persecutions assailed him always), the newly initiated Dante trod on those figures in the stone. The first whom he beheld was he who fell from heaven, Satan himself. The first souls whom he sees in purgatory groan under the weight of ponderous stones. Dante feels all the horrors of such a state; but he comforts himself with the idea, that at worst, it cannot last beyond the final judgment; and he finds some relief from the present in the hope of a better future. Here begins the poetical series of the mystic purgations, whose progressive course we shall here in a few words bring to view. The second part of the poem contains the means by which the reign of disorder, as described in the hell, may be converted into its very opposite, the reign of order, by the reformation of morals. The following is the process of purification from the seven deadly vices: — First, virtue is preached in opposition to the vice which is diminishing; then, the malignant nature of vice is shown, by the allegorical punishment it receives; and finally, vice is held up to reproach, by the ill effects it produces. Thus, in the first place, *Pride*, the first vice, is opposed to *Humility*, which is exalted, by examples taken from ancient historical facts. Secondly, *Pride* is lessened, by the fact of those who were given to it expiating their vice by an adequate punishment. Thirdly, Pride is made odious, by other instances taken from ancient history: and so with all the other six vices. This is nothing more than the practice of the secret school, enlivened with poetical colours, for the purpose of bringing a corrupt nation to good order. In the before cited romance of Le Sethos, we read that the rulers of the secret society decreed that, "according to the order of all discipline which tends to the reformation of morals, the extirpation of every vice must precede the acquisition of the virtue opposed to it; that for that purpose the exercises should begin: First, By a discourse

made against one particular vice. Secondly, That this discourse should be followed by the sacrifice of a goat to the goddess Isis as a symbol of the vice. Thirdly, That after this, another member should make a second discourse, which should explain the conditions and the advantages of the contrary virtue." (B. 7.)

As the falling from vice to vice, down to the very basest, produces the deep valley of sin, so the rising from virtue to virtue, until the highest is attained, produced the lofty mountain of Purgatory; and thus the entire construction of the first two parts of the poem is reduced in substance to two metaphors, which are physically described, because the genius of ancient figures consists in the change of an abstract into a concrete form. Hence, the poet descends always until he reaches the infernal Babylon, where dwells Lucifer, the source of every misfortune that vice can cause; and gradually ascends until he comes to the heavenly Jerusalem, where Beatrice, the fountain of every blessing attendant on virtue, waits for him. The first journey ends with the waters of Cocytus; the second, with the waters of Lethe, which brings forgetfulness of the first; and in the mystic immersion and draught, every remains of evil is cleansed and washed from the memory; the object of the pilgrimage to the high and lofty mountain, the object of the ancient school. The learned believe that the secret science, which many nations borrowed from Egypt, was originally transplanted into that country from India. Dante compares the trees in his earthly paradise to those of Indian growth, and the author of Ant. Dev. relates that there was a mountain in India, the supposed site of paradise, which in the time of Apollonius Tyanæus, was the retreat of several learned men, who had in their keeping wonderful fountains. The waters of these fountains served to purify the Indians, who believed that by their virtues all their sins were remitted to them. (B. 2. ch. 3.)

We may now sum up our argument in a very few

words. The beginning, middle and end of the second part of Dante's poem, all exactly correspond with the course of the sectarian mysteries. Their appearance of religion is a specious veil which hides their political essence; and their final aim is explained in the grand scene of the judgment pronounced by Beatrice, which is a figure of the symbolic sectarian judgment; the mystic lady represents the justice of that monarch who was to come and judge the *living* and the *dead;* she does judge the *living* in the person of Dante, and the *dead* in the person of the woman; in the first she searches the heart of erring man, and pardons him when truly penitent: in the second she examines the deceiving Babylon, and condemns her because she is perverse. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." (Rev. xvii. 8.) "The vessel, which thou saw'st the serpent break, was, and is not." (Purg. 33.)

## CHAPTER XX.

### ON OTHER AUTHORS WHO HAVE TREATED OF AN ALLEGORICAL JUDGMENT.

In this and the following chapter, we propose taking a hasty notice of the works of some of those innumerable writers in allegorical language, who have treated of the Judgment and Resurrection, and confirmed the view we have taken of the same subject in the preceding chapter.

Francesco Barberini was a writer of this class. He was a Ghibelline of consummate prudence, but, being known to favour the cause of Henry VII., he was persecuted by the Guelphic party in Florence.* He was born only one year before Dante, and survived him twenty-seven years, falling at last a victim to the dreadful plague of Florence, so well described in the Decameron. This Barberini left behind him two works on the subject of love, between which there is an obvious connection; the one called "Documenti d'Amore," the other "Reggimento delle donne," and both highly praised by Boccaccio. The first treats of the Universal Judgment; the last of the Resurrection of the Dead.

A very severe punishment was reserved for those faithless members who revealed the mysteries of the sect, which was called *losing the key*. The allegorical ship,

* See in his life, written by Federico Ubaldini, how he was deprived of his honours and employments, because he espoused that emperor's party.

of which Beatrice was the admiral, and the Emperor the pilot, is a figure of the government of the sect, guarded by such a key; and Barberini, writing of this vessel, says; "April* is the time for setting sail; and, if you would pass secretly, hoist the *black* sail, called the *wolf*, and set the *white* one undermost. Fail not to be constantly on the watch; and, if you are forced to fight, keep up the spirits of your crew, and let all be firmly resolved to conquer or die; for you cannot fly when the *key* of the *vessel* is in other hands." (Doc. d'Am. Prudenza, doc. 9.) The work concludes with the Last Judgment, in which Justice comes to punish those who have lost the key. This Justice is the Beatrice of Dante, and the poet says that she is the Justice, sent by Love, to punish the faithless guardians of their trust; and that no mercy will be shown to the wicked if *El* judges them with rigour.

In the "Reggimento delle donne," the author describes the resurrection of the dead, which takes place under Love's directions, in a garden, corresponding with Dante's earthly paradise. "All rising, hasten to the garden, where Love sits in the midst, wounding every one; and they call him *Lord*. He has power and authority over kings and queens, who show him honour and reverence. He causes the wounded and the *dead* to be brought before him, and says over them these words: 'My *strokes* are of that nature, that those who are supposed to be *most dead* are the very ones in whom *life* is strongest. Arise, sleep no more, you who seem *outwardly dead*, and you, the wounded, who are safe from death.' Thus saying, Love raised the living and the dead."

* In April, Petrarch first saw Laura; in April, Laura died. In the same month, he began his poem of Africa, and was afterwards crowned for it. In April, Bartolo described the world to be redeemed from the slavery of Satan. In April, Dante undertook his pilgrimage, and many other poets fell in love. The reason for this general choice will be shown elsewhere.

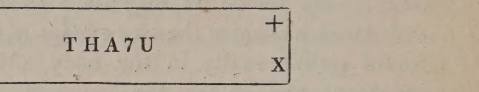
(Part 5.) This resurrection of the dead, under the eye of *Love*, signified to the inhabitants of that cloister "in which Christ is abbot of the college," that when their King of kings should come in triumph, they were to throw aside the mask of error, which they had worn in the kingdom of their enemy. The verse, "You who seem outwardly dead," is sufficiently explicit. The same meaning is conveyed in Virgil's words to Dante, when they entered Dis, the figurative Florence. He points to the tombs, and tells him that they will all be closed (that is, that there will be no dead ones within) when the dead return from the valley of Josaphat with the bodies they have left there. (Inf. 10.) Meaning to say, that the unhappy exiles, who while Satan reigned there, were forced to disguise themselves as papalists, and dared not enter the city except in thought and mind, would return really in the body after the triumphant judgment, and witness the conquest and punishment of their enemy. The poet described himself and his brethren in misfortune.

Cino of Pistoja was another of the exiled friends of Dante. If we may believe his own words, this Ghibelline threatened unspeakable things against *death* at the day of judgment. Those who are now assured that the allegorical *woman* is no female, will have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that this *death* figures a man also;* his poem abounds with such expressions as these: "O death, in the day of judgment thou shalt be met with a just reward; thy wickedness shall be refrained, and thyself condemned to the same death which thou dost inflict on mankind. O how I burn to destroy thee! Go, my ode, to those who are in *life*, and bid them preserve their courage and remember to combat death always."

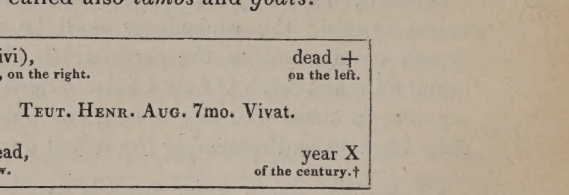
* So Petrarch, writing to his friends to warn them that Louis of Bavaria, was neither earnest nor sincere in his pretended threats against the Pope, said: "Do not all these proofs convince ye that the Bavarian is deceiving you and holding up his finger to Death in jest?"

When Henry VII. entered Italy in 1310, his partisans really thought that the great day was approaching, when this figurative Son of man would divide the good from the bad, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left," (St. Matt. xxv.) and full of this audacious hope, Barberini advised his friends to destroy the *wild goats*, while the moment was propitious, and not to waste in careless security the time which was so valuable. He concluded his address by urging them to make a *sign* which would prove very efficacious against the evil spirits, and to make it with *goats' blood*.*

SIGN TO BE MADE.




The careless reader will pronounce unhesitatingly that the centre word is the mystic *Thau* mentioned by Ezekiel; if that be true, what does the 7 signify? And what mean the four signs in the corners? If we open the book of Matthew at the chapter which describes our Lord on the judgment day, dividing the good from the bad, and as a shepherd, setting the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left, we shall understand who this allegorical saviour really was, who is placed between the living and the dead, called also *lambs* and *goats*.




* See the verses and the sign in the "Reggimento delle Donne." Part 16. Rome, 1815.

† In 1310, Henry entered Italy.

The word Enrico (Henry) was written at that time either with or without an H.

We find in Boccaccio's Amorosa Visione, that to keep up the acrostics, he wrote several words, sometimes with the H, and sometimes without it; for instance, *Ora* and *Hora*, *Aveva* and *Haveva*, *Ercole* and *Hercole*, &c. and according to the same licence Henrico or Enrico. That Emperor was called *Enrico* or *Arrigo*, and sometimes *Arrico*; and in the ancient manuscripts of Dante's poem, we find Enrico, and Arrigo both written. Cino and Boccaccio generally wrote Arrigo, but in both we meet with the word Enrico.

> Enrico senza par, Cesare invitto.—Cino.
> Dov' è il solio d' Enrico ancor vacante.—Boccaccio.

While Barberini was thus encouraging his friends to destroy the goats, Cino was exulting in the approach of the Saviour transformed into a lady, and exclaiming with Simeon, "My eyes have seen thy salvation." In the verses addressed to this saviour, he prays him to hasten, and dry up the *tears* which are shed for him, and save his worshippers from *death*. We may imagine the despair with which this saviour's party beheld the ruin of their cherished hopes: his triumph seemed so certain, the dawn of Italy's happiness so near. Disease however, or (as some will have it) treachery, cut him off in the midst of his enterprise. Whether or not he died from the effects of eating a poisoned wafer, given to him by a friar who administered the sacrament to him, we have now no means of ascertaining; but it is certain that the Guelphic princes were suspected of bribing the friar to commit the deed, and that the Pope's name was whispered in conjunction with theirs in this dark transaction. Funeral songs were strewed over the grave of the hero; his praises and their sad regrets were sung by Cino, and Barberini, by Sennuccio del Bene and Giglio Lelli, but above every other, by Dante himself, in strains of the bitterest grief.

Some wrote literally, and others figuratively, while Sennuccio blended both styles in his canzone. When the sad news was communicated to Lelli, his answer expressed the sorrow with which he remembered that their mighty Lord would never permit his subjects to destroy *death* and banish it from the world; a regret which taken *literally*, would have been sheer nonsense.

Dante's tribute on this sad event has not come down to us; Cino's canzone begins: "The same thing that fills the earth with sadness, increases the boldness and presumption of *death*. All that is most noble in valour; all that we read of virtue; all that is most worthy of praise was united in that Lord; the unequalled Henry, the invincible Cæsar, the only fit wearer of the crown. He was the form of that good who chastens and rules the elements;" that is, he was a figure of God, the ruler of the elements: and by his death, the unhappy exiles saw themselves bereft of the hope of sitting on the right hand of the judge of the living and the dead, on that day when Mary (the sect) was to have shared in the glory of her son. In the days of Henry's grandson, the pusillanimous Charles, their hopes again revived, and hence Boccaccio exclaimed: "O queen of angels, Mary, have mercy upon me, and deliver me from the snares of him who is lying in wait for me. Guide me in the straight path, and enable me to sit on the right hand of thy Son, in the kingdom of the blessed." (See Son. 45.)

These are the words of that writer, who was supposed to have penned this adjuration in a moment of contrition for past excesses!—that Boccaccio, who whether devout or profane, was always covered with a mask.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ON OTHER WRITERS WHO CONFORMED TO THE POLITICAL SPIRIT OF DANTE'S POEM.

The numerous enemies who encompassed Babylon, appear never to have lost sight of their constant, though often blighted hope, that the realization of their wishes, and the advent of the New Jerusalem were at hand. In their own self-created illusions, they often beheld the age of gold almost within their grasp, although experience must have taught them to fear that, like a shining bubble, it would vanish long ere they could reach it. A new sultan of Babylon had been chosen, and Petrarch was in hopes that he would have united the Catholic and Mahomedan faiths into one (considering both as idolatrous). In one of his many dreams on the occasion, he expressed the impatience with which he looked forward to behold the punishment of avaricious Babylon and her ruler,* and the overthrow of her towers, and predicted at the same time that their keepers would be burned outwardly with material fire, as they were already inwardly scorched with the fire of hell; concluding by a prophecy that after this,

* Petrarch narrates that Sancho, King of Castile, declared the Pope to be the Caliph of Babylon. See Rer. Memor. B. 2. art. Sanctius rex Castellæ.

souls full of virtue would possess the world, and cause the return of the golden days. (See Son. 106.)

Once more these Ghibelline poets did flatter themselves with the idea that their season of deliverance was at hand. The grandson of their adored Henry VII. marched into Italy. "Charles IV. as emperor, was always the chief of the Ghibelline league; even Florence, who had shaken off the yoke of the emperors, besought him to enter Italy." (De Sade, Life of Petrarch.) It is true; they were full of bright anticipations, because they knew him not; and believing that in him they were to expect their saviour, the whole party throughout the peninsula of Italy waited his coming in anxious hope. Petrarch wrote to him several times, and we have one letter in particular, wherein he describes in vivid terms, the universal desire which prevailed: "You know the greatness of the undertaking; hasten then to accomplish it. This is the ancient seat of the empire; this is the head;* never did Italy more ardently desire its prince; hasten then, hasten. Take for your model Cæsar, the founder of the empire, who gained every thing by despatch." He describes to him Rome personified as an august matron, calling upon him and assuring him that he will find no obstacle to oppose the fullness of his triumph. She reminds him of the glorious deeds of his ancestor, Henry VII., whose great soul speaks to him thus through her: "O my beloved son, I live again in thee. Go, restore Rome to her ancient glory. The good and brave will all unite together, and fight under thy eagles. The wicked alone will tremble. Go, then, accomplish my enterprise, and wait not until death comes upon thee as it overtook me. Rome expects her spouse, and Italy her saviour."

Charles yielded, at length, to the entreaties of the Ghibellines. After a long delay, he wrote to Petrarch,

* Dante calls Italy the *Garden of the Empire*, and every other state, (even Germany) a district. (Purg. 6.)

confessing that the obstacles he anticipated, and his own insignificant force, would have deterred him from the project, had not *love* urged him on, by showing him a bright futurity of triumphs and crowns, and a glorious place among the stars. In 1354, exactly thirty-three years after the death of Dante, he entered Italy. "The emperor Charles invited Petrarch to meet him at Mantua, and the poet obeyed the summons with alacrity. He stayed with the prince eight days, and witnessed all the negociations between him and the heads of the Lombard league. Charles spent every moment he could spare from public duties in the society of Petrarch. Their conversations, which the poet has described in one of his letters, were very honourable to the character of the emperor, as they show that he did not check the energetic freedom of Petrarch's remarks. When the poet was taking leave of the prince, a Tuscan knight in the royal suite took him by the hand, and said to the emperor: This is the man who will celebrate your name, if your deeds are worthy of his praises; if they are not, he knows how to speak and how to be silent." (Ginguené, Art. Petrarch.)

The sectarians now began seriously to entertain a hope that their wishes were about to be crowned with success; and Petrarch composed for the occasion the canzone: "Una donna più bella assai che 'l sole," which describes two females, figures of political and religious government, the first of whom leads him to the triumph of the second, and crowns him with laurel, in allusion to his lady, Laura. The canzone which was despatched as an announcement of the wished-for coming, to every member of the party, alludes at its termination to the great promises made to him by the emperor when they parted, and expresses a hope that he *has not been deceived.* Four other similar compositions did Petrarch write at the same period, of which we shall now speak, in the order in which he composed and arranged them in his collection of odes. The first was written, when the poet who never ceased his

thunderings in verse and prose, both Italian and Latin, against Babylon, fancied that the time of her destruction was come; and it declares that "the successor of Charlemagne, the heir of his crown and name, has taken up arms to break the horns of Babylon, and of those from whom she is named.* The vicar of Christ will return to Rome armed with his mantle and keys;† and the meek and gentle *lamb* will destroy the fierce *wolves*, and punish those who have forsaken their lawful love. Console then this *lamb*, and Rome too who is weeping for her *bridegroom*, and gird on the sword for *Jesus*." (See the Canzone.) "Rome calls upon her spouse; armies will join thee; and under thy command will strive to reconquer the liberty they have lost." (See Petrarch's letter to the Emperor.) This was the spouse of Rome, the saviour for whom the sword was to be girded; by a metaphor taken from the revelations, where the New Jerusalem is the spouse of Christ; here Rome being figured as the New Jerusalem, the emperor becomes the bridegroom.

It is curious to see how the interpreters are puzzled in their endeavours to explain this sonnet; they are quite at a loss to tell for what purpose it was written and to whom sent, they cannot identify the successor of Charles, neither can they understand what is meant by the *lamb* or the *wolves*, and they search in vain through volumes of history to find in what year an expedition was despatched against a soldan of Babylon, while the Pope (their vicar of Christ and spouse of Rome) was preparing to return to his own city. Muratori, who was the Mnemosyne of the annals of Italy confessed: "Here I find history so wrapped in darkness, that I know not how to decide." We should marvel at the blindness which could mistake the Babylon of Petrarch, were it not for the consideration that

* "By whom Babylon was first founded is uncertain, but her inhabitants are well known; from them she acquired her present name." Petrarch. Ep. sine titulo.

† Not that vicar whom the sect called Antichrist and Lucifer.

without some knowledge of the mysteries of the sect to which he belonged, no writer can avoid these embarrassments.

After this last-mentioned sonnet follows the ode, "O aspettata in Ciel," which was addressed to the priest of the secret worship; and invited him to second the enterprize of the figurative saviour, whose vicar he was; assuring him that all the sectarians throughout Europe, among whom the sacred poetical jargon was in use, were prepared to exert their best endeavours in the same cause.

He tells us, that the followers of Christ were to throw off the yoke of those "Turks, Arabs, and Chaldeans, who put their trust in the god son this side of the sea, whose waves are red.* People at once lazy and timorous, whose hands never grasped a sword.† Now, therefore, is the time to draw the neck from under the old yoke, and to tear off the veil which has been bound over our eyes." When did ever the Turks bind a veil over the eyes of Italian Christians? That part of the ode which we have left unnoticed, is, generally speaking, clear and literal; except where the author, in order to carry on the allegory, speaks of Italy under the name of Asia: as, in one of his sonnets, Cino says of Dante—"He married Sion to the Appenines." The termination of Petrarch's canzone may be translated literally, as follows: "Canzone, thou wilt behold Italy, which is hidden from my view; not by sea, nor hill, nor river, but only by *Love* (the Emperor), to whom I am more devoted, in proportion as I become more familiar with it. Deceive not those companions who use the jargon of love; for love dwells under the veil of this language, and under the mask of religion as well; and for love we *laugh* and *weep*." "Are you a master? I have wept and laughed," is written in the catechism of

* An equivocal expression, which seems to signify the Red Sea, while it is, in fact, figurative of the cruelties of the holy office.

† Is this a portrait of the then celebrated and valiant Turks? Surely not: these Turks, Arabs, and Chaldeans, are priests, monks, and friars.

the third degree; in which, at nine years of age, they die and are born again, they weep and laugh.* In another degree, the apparent object is the deliverance of the Holy Land. "The ostensible object of this degree (32d), is the invasion of the Holy Land, and its deliverance from the infidels. This is to be effected by uniting all the Masons, ancient and modern, under one commander, and directing them *en masse* upon the *Mahometans*, who have wickedly established themselves in that sacred region. Hence the complexion of this degree is military."† These are the Turks of Petrarch's ode.

The last canzone was considered by interpreters to be even more unintelligible than the preceding one. Histories, chronicles, archives, all were searched and pondered over, and nothing was found to reward the labours of the critics, or to extricate them from their doubts. Tassoni, scandalised at the concluding part, exclaimed, that Petrarch, in an ode addressed to a high personage, "a soul expected in heaven," ‡ when it was peculiarly incumbent on him to show a moral and zealous fervour for the divine honour, proclaims himself to be vain, sensual, and given to unrighteous love; and he agrees with Muratori in calling the last three verses *very obscure*. They little thought that the *soul*, to whom the canzone was addressed, *wept* and *laughed* also, and for the very same love; but this love was hidden under a veil, and therefore never discovered by them, nor their successors. And I now say to my contemporaries, in the words of Dante: "Rarely, *when veiled*, do obscure words penetrate to the intellect; therefore to thee I will speak openly."

In the very same year, 1354, and for the same occasion, the learned Bartolo, Cino's pupil, and Petrarch's intimate friend, wrote a work in the conventional language; which,

* See the degree of master, in the "Francs Maçons," p. 289. Ams. 1774.

† Light on Masonry, p. 538.

‡ This writer had no idea who this personage could be.

to those who are ignorant of its inward meaning, must appear the most incoherent extravagance ever penned by madman. He imagined a forensic cause brought on in heaven, before the tribunal of Christ; the agents being the devil on one side, and the Virgin Mary on the other; the first appearing as the accuser, the last as the defender of human nature. If those, who have amused themselves at the expense of this work, had been aware that the Saviour is a figure of Charles—Mary, of the sect—Satan, of the Pope—and mankind, of the sectarian Italians;—instead of ridiculing it, they would have found it full of valuable information as to the expectations entertained of the Emperor, and the extent and boldness of the hopes conceived by the antipapalists in general. Bartolo took the idea of this trial from the passage in Scripture so often applied against the Pope: "The prince of this world is judged;" and it was always supposed that this judgment was to precede the establishment of the New Jerusalem. Probably it was this very work which first drew Charles's attention on Bartolo; for he became, soon after its publication, his most favoured counsellor, and was honoured with especial privileges.

The book is entitled "A Treatise: containing the Cause brought on before our Lord Jesus Christ, between the Virgin Mary on one side, and the Devil on the other." It is found in the complete edition of Bartolo's works (Lyons, 1547); and from its pages we present the following summary to our readers. The work commences with the address of Satan to his consistory; and the tone of sanctity which he assumes is worthy of remark, as being in exact imitation of the person whom he represents. "Dearly beloved brethren, you know the treason of which the priestly ministry of Judas was guilty, you know that the same Judas betrayed to death his Master, who was called the Son of God; and equally known to you is the fact, that mankind was doomed, from the creation of the world, owing to Eve's disobedience; and afterwards

saved by means of the glorious Virgin Mary. So that a woman brought ruin, and a woman brought salvation."

Eve, the cause of perdition, and Mary, the bringer of salvation, are figures very often employed in this jargon, to signify the Papal church, which caused all manner of evil; and the reformed, or sectarian church, which repaired it. Satan says no more, and the narration proceeds:— "After craftily assembling the infernal council, the next thought of malignant and unbridled ambition was, how human nature might be reduced to its original servitude. After long and maturely pondering on divers iniquitous plans, it was decided to send a lawyer to the presence of the Saviour. Let it not be wondered that we say the devil may appear before his Lord; because such really is the case, by the express permission of the Saviour of mankind. The deputy, lawfully constituted, and accustomed to such matters, accordingly presented himself, and said: Creator of heaven and earth,* hear, I beseech thee, why I appear before thee. The Lord answered him: We will listen to nothing thou hast to say; for well do we remember that, when we were in the world, thou wished then to talk with us, telling us that, if we would only worship thee, thou wouldst give us marvellous things." However, at the importunities of the deputy of Satan, who dared to tax the Judge with injustice, in case he refused to hear him, mankind was ordered to appear, that this important cause might be argued in due form. The devil wished to be heard on the following day; but the Judge said: "I appoint the hearing for the third day, that is, for Good Friday" (that day, as we have already repeatedly declared, is very symbolical).

The deputy of Satan still continued boldly to press for the next day; but the Judge of the living and the dead declared firmly: "We make laws, and give authority to them;" words which allude to the power invested in the

* This is an expression which is here used in the conventional sense only.

Roman emperors of making laws; and hence Bartolo quotes the analogous words in the Digest: *Sed quod Principi*, &c. The archangel Gabriel was then commanded to sound the *iron trumpet*, to summon mankind from earth to heaven. We must here observe why the *iron* trumpet was sounded at this time, and the *golden* one afterwards. The iron trumpet called mankind while still subject to Satan's authority (the iron age of Babylon); and the golden one will proclaim it safe under the dominion of Christ (the golden age of the New Jerusalem).

"These things being done, Satan went back to hell, and related what had passed to the devils his companions; and they agreed, in council, that the same lawyer should attend on their side on the day appointed. Good Friday being come, the devil was punctual in his attendance, and waited until the ninth hour." At the ninth hour, Christ died upon the cross; and as mankind figures the human nature of Christ which died, it is not to be expected that it could ascend to appear before the divine nature of Christ, which is ever-living. This part is very mystical; and, under the name of Christ, we must here understand, not only the head, but all the members of the great body of Patarini, Albigenses, or Paulicians; as St. Paul calls Christ the union of all Christians.* Mankind, therefore, will not appear at all; but, on the third day, it will be declared *raised from the dead;* that is, delivered from error, and redeemed from the bondage of Satan.

"The devil saw many coming and going, and complained bitterly that he was the only one not heard; and, at length, summoning up all his audacity, he cried: Father, before thy face, I protest against mankind. Away,

* "For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." (1 Cor. 12.)

"E con le piaghe indegne de' Cristiani
Offender Cristo, ond' ei son membra e parti."
Tasso. Ger. 5.

froward one, answered his Lord; have I not already said that the whole of this day is granted to mankind? So he was obliged to wait until darkness came on; but he exclaimed loudly and often: Where is thy justice, Lord? Even in heaven, there is none to be found! The Judge then cried: Come, cursed one; the hour is come, I will hear thee."

Mankind does not appear, for the reasons we have before assigned. "Then the devil spoke thus: I intend to proceed in accordance with the established rules followed in courts of law; and that being the case, I first declare mankind guilty of contumacy. And, although the laws have determined in all such cases that the judges are to proceed by publishing the sentence of excommunication (as you well know), I do not require that; I only ask for letters, to certify that I have legally appeared, and that the other party has not done so. By this, he sought to subject us anew to slavery; but the Lord, who knew the secret of his dark mind, answered: According to the dictates of equity, we have a right, and do adjourn this cause until the following day." And then the law is cited, which gave the Emperor that right. The demon, still continuing to talk of injustice, was commanded to be silent; and was finally turned out of heaven, and ordered back to hell. And if the first tale he had to tell his brethren was hard to hear, still more so was the present.

It being now late, there arose a loud murmur in heaven, when it was known that mankind was contumacious. The angels exclaimed: That it was not good that mankind should be lost; and their cry ascended to the blessed Virgin Mary, who, upon hearing it, promised the saints and angels that she, as advocate of mankind, would take upon herself to defend them in this cause, and all heaven rejoiced at the news; while Satan's deputy, when he returned to the presence of the Judge, saw with dismay the advantage gained over him. The Virgin Mary advanced, surrounded by the glorious company of angels,

who sang to her: Hail queen of heaven! mother o. mercy, we who are miserable mortals implore thee to save us from our malignant enemy.* Hearing this the advocate proceeded on her way, and seated herself at the right hand of her Son. Then the angels cried: O advocate of mankind, you see the pride and cunning of this infernal lawyer. He never ceases his endeavours to poison the mind of the Judge against human nature. Upon this, Mary sternly gazed at the infernal deputy.

"Then the lawyer, having leave to speak, thus addressed the Judge: Holy Father,† do not let thy feelings of kindred or love influence thee, but only justice. Thou art *charity* and *truth* ‡, and thou hast said: I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am ready to plead my cause, but I see none to speak to; three parties are necessary to constitute a trial, viz. a judge, an accuser, and a criminal; but I see no criminal here. The words of the devil satisfy me, answered the Virgin, as I see no lawful accuser here, the trial cannot be lawful; and therefore, he is not to be heard. The devil answered: the accuser is my deputy, and the accusation is already produced, and written out by the hand of the public notary, year of our Lord, 1354, &c.: present, Raphino de Machometo and Cerberus, with several others," &c. &c.

"In the year 1354, Charles IV., emperor, entered Italy." (Bur. Struvius, H. of Germ. v. i. p. 729.) See also Corio's History of Milan; De Sade; and Baldelli's Life of

* This sentence, by which the angels identify themselves with human nature, is not here inserted by accident. The sectarians called themselves angels and heavenly spirits, as they called their chief, Christ and God; and the union of such angels with this Lord was called Heaven. It is in this sense that their Saviour is called the Creator of heaven and earth.

† The head of the secret worship, and not him whom we usually hear addressed by that title.

‡ *Charity*, *Love*, and *Truth*, all synonimous terms in the allegorical language.

Petrarch; Muratori's Annals of Italy, and others. The name of Raphino de Machometo sufficiently explains that this Satan is the King of Babylon, a Mahometan; and the Cerberus is the representative of the holy office.

The cause being called on, a warm altercation ensued between the devil and Mary: he asserting that no woman can act the part of an advocate; and she contending that it is always lawful to assist the unhappy; and that none can be more miserable than those who are under the dominion of Satan. The two parties being admitted to plead before the judge, Satan opened his claims thus: "I claim to be restored to the full and free possession of mankind, with the liberty of torturing them as heretofore; and I am ready to prove that I, Satan, was always allowed to have a right of dominion over them."

Then follows the conflicting evidence of each party, in the style of a court of law. Mary dwells particularly on the fact that Satan is not the real owner, but only the keeper of the infernal prison, where man groans in slavery. The real nature of this prison is evident: it is the earth; for there is no mention made of ransoming souls from hell, but only of freeing men from the temporal power of Satan. In fact, Mary's arguments are the arguments of Dante and Cino, and all the rest of the sect, viz. that the Pope is not a prince, but a mere vicar of the Emperor, in a province entrusted to his care; and in this sense called the Vicar of Christ. In the Monarchia, B. I. and 3. Dante asserts seriously, that the earth and all its inhabitants belong, by right, to the Emperor, as the seamless robe to Christ; and that to separate the one, would be as great a crime as to tear asunder the other. Mary proceeds to say to her son: "Mankind cannot be restored to the devil, because he never had any claim over them. You, my son, are the rightful lord over men; and although he may for some time have had possession of them, no length of days justifies usurpation; and therefore there can be no reason to restore what never

was his. What hast thou to say to this, cursed demon? Then the devil gnashed his teeth in rage."

In vain Satan's deputy, with the Bible in his hand, reminds her, that, when Adam and Eve sinned, mankind became his property; Mary answers, that as he was the cause of that sin being committed, the punishment ought to fall on him, as the tempter, rather than on those who weakly yielded to temptation; and every argument urged by him, is confuted by her in a similar manner; she then appeals to her son's recollection of the many insults he has borne from this Satan (in allusion to the contumely and injuries which the popes had heaped on the emperors, at different times), and with many sighs and tears, in which the heavenly spirits join, she kneels before him, and says: "My son, behold the demon who reviled thee, and behold me, thy mother. How long wilt thou suffer the cunning of this demon to prevail? I ask the salvation of mankind, and he seeks its destruction." Her son, moved by her tears and words, refuses to hear any more; but the demon opens the New Testament, and reads: The prince of this world comes. You say that I am the the prince of this world; * discord has always reigned between us, † each claiming, what the other looks upon as his own. Now, therefore, I propose that you shall divide the good from the bad, and rule over the good, while I will govern the bad. The advocate, turning to her son, said: Thou art the judge both of the *living* and the *dead* (synonimous with the good and the bad). Then ensued a loud dispute between Mary and the devil, who raging in despair cried: I have sinned, and have been condemned, and if man has sinned, why should he not be condemned also? Upon which Mary exclaimed: Thou art blessed, my son, over every creature, and before thy name every knee bows. Man sinned against thee; and

* The same passage in Scripture, so often applied to the popes.

† Between the priesthood and the empire.

hence, in thy will is the power to remit those sins. If he sinned from levity only, he should not be condemned for that; if from madness, he should be pitied; if from injuries received, his offences should be forgiven. For this we have the authority of the well-known law — '*Si quis imperator;*' &c. &c., the law of an emperor of Rome, which by Metastasio is attributed to Titus, and which this Mary begs her son, the Emperor, to adopt. The Judge then orders the demon to be silent, reminding him that mankind have already been redeemed from sin; and therefore that it would not be just that they should suffer twice for the same fault. Then he orders the angel Gabriel to take the *golden trumpet*, and summon Mary, the advocate of human nature, on one side, and the infernal accuser on the other, to hear his sentence; and the day being come, he seated himself on the throne of judgment, and said: Having considered the accusation against mankind, brought by the infernal deputy, and the defence produced by Mary, the advocate of human nature; having considered the propositious and replies on each side, &c.; we, seated on our tribunal of justice, which is placed over the thrones of the angels in the kingdom of our residence; declare mankind to be unconditionally absolved, according to the judgment pronounced in the holy Scriptures; and we order that the author of infernal wickedness shall be cast into the endless tortures of hell. (The devil then departs, with rent garments and anguish of mind, to the infernal regions.) "This sentence was given, pronounced, and promulgated, as this writing certifies, by the above-mentioned Lord, seated on his tribunal of Justice, in the presence of the before-cited parties; and read and published by me, John the Evangelist, his notary, and the scribe of the public, before John the Baptist, Francis and Dominic, Peter and Paul the apostles, Michael the archangel, and many other saints, who were called as witnesses, and who testify to these things. Anno Domini, 1311, the 6th day of April."

This last date, 1311, does not correspond with the preceding one of 1354, but there is design in the difference. The first marks the year in which Charles IV. entered Italy; the last is the epoch of the regeneration of Italy undertaken by his grandfather, Henry VII., the hope and idol of Dante and the imperial party, whom Petrarch recalled to the recollection of his descendant, by the mouth of personified Rome. This said year (1311) is commemorated and registered among the secret ceremonies of the sect, as the period when great and important changes took place, as we have already proved by their own solemn document. Before we proceed any further, we shall here notice another very brief judgment given by this Saviour, and written by an equally warm partisan of the Emperor Charles. The presiding judge sits on the same throne where Bartolo's judge is placed; but a name is substituted, for that of Satan, which shows, as plainly as words can speak, who is meant: "Come to thy seat, O judge, and let that voice be heard which will speak woe to so many, and to the *shepherd* more than all. Where is the might of that empire which was once feared throughout all the world? Spare not thy hand, but let it fall heavily." The hint here thrown out, to lay hands on the *pastor* especially, would have been more appropriately addressed to a Lazzarone, than to the Judge of the living and the dead. Besides this madrigal of Buonaccorso da Montemagno, we have a canzone on the same theme, in the form of a dialogue between Mary and the judge, which was composed in those days by Antonio da Ferrara, a friend of Petrarch's, besides many others of the same kind; but, in order no longer to retard the reflections to which our extracts have given rise in our mind, we must omit all mention of them.

Bartolo dated the judgment of Christ against Satan on the 6th day of April, at the first hour of the day; — the very month, day and hour, in which Petrarch fell in

love with Laura in the city of Avignon! A not less curious coincidence strikes us afterwards: In the same city, month, day and hour, Laura died; and her tender lover records the sad event in the following words: — "She first appeared *to my eyes* on the 6th day of April, in the morning hour, in the church of St. Clara, in Avignon; and in the same city, same month, same day, and same first hour, that *Light* was taken away from *this light*."* Thus was Madonna *Light* taken away from the light; and, in the very same place and at the same time when she had found "the way open through the *eyes* to the *heart*, which had became vacant from excessive *weeping*." Nothing in this *life* could have pleased him so much as this *death*, and, when he had by it broken the snares which encompassed him, he thought the time was come for him to fly from Babylon; and this devoted lover, who compared his lady's birth with that of our Saviour, and fell in love with her on the day when that Saviour died, went to *Rome* to seek her real form there (See Son. 14.), after the example of Dante, who sent his wandering thought to see his lady, who was discovered in "that Rome where Christ is a Roman," and in imitation of many other lovers who belonged to that cloister "in which Christ is abbot of the college."

With regard, then, to the great works of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Bartolo and others, we perceive the singular correspondence of events which happened on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday, of the Holy Week, both to their ladies and themselves; we notice that those days were fatal to the hearts of bards of love in other countries besides Italy — to Onesto Bolognese, for instance, another singer of Christ the judge, who fell in love on Holy Thursday, and to Ludovico Martelli and Ausias March, the provençal troubadour, who both be-

* This note was written by Petrarch in his celebrated Virgil. See De Sade, Baldelli, Ginguené, Tiraboschi, and others who speak of Petrarch.

came enamoured in a temple on Good Friday, the first with a Laura, the second with Teresa. This last poet saw his lady, whom he calls *Light*, taken away from the light, and accordingly divided his works into *Rhymes of Love, and Rhymes of Death*. Petrarch did the very same thing, and, not contented with that, sang, in his last work, the Triumph of Love and the Triumph of Death.

How barbarous was the fate of these lovers! Let us take the cases of the most renowned of our own country. Dante loved Beatrice, and she died; the mourner vented his grief in prose and verse, and wrote a letter to the princes of the earth, beginning with: How doth she sit solitary! Petrarch loved Laura, and she died; his only consolation consisted in lamenting his loss in verse and prose, in Latin and Italian. Boccaccio loved Fiammetta, Cino loved Selvaggia, &c. &c., and their misfortunes were in no respect less heavy than those of their friends. They do not *all* tell us at what hour Madonna first appeared to their eyes, neither the exact time when she vanished; but those who do note it down, give us to know that it was at the *first hour of the day*, the same hour which Bartolo mentions: "The first hour, on the 6th day of April."

> "L'ora prima era, e'l dì sesto d'Aprile
> Che pria mi strinse, ed or, lasso! mi sciolse!" (Petrarch.)

At the first hour of the day, *Lucia* sent Beatrice to assist Dante, who was in the dark forest; and then it was that he first saw the *light* dawn on the mystic mountain.

> "The hour was morning's prime, and on his way
> Aloft the *sun* ascended with those *stars*
> That with him rose when *Love* divine first mov'd
> Those its fair works."*

* We must bear in mind the *conventional* sense of these terms. The *sun* is the sectarian jargon, the *stars* are the seven degrees of the sect, and *Love* is the sectarian science, or the head of the sect.

"Not without good cause" (writes Landini) "did he choose this hour; — it is the very time to set out on a journey of thought, when the *sun* begins to appear, that is, when *reason* wakes in us, without whose *light* we can attain to no knowledge." At the very same hour, Beatrice expired. "Her noble soul departed at the first hour of the day." (Vita Nuova, p. 48.)

But all these things happened *by chance*, *mere chance*, and so the following is chance also, without a doubt. When the descendants of the Templars first see the *light* in the temple of *light*, they call it the *first hour of the day;* and when, after certain regulations made by them, the *light* is withdrawn, they call *that* also *the first hour of the day;* so that the degree called the *first*, and that called the *non plus ultra* offer, the first *the coming*, and the last *the vanishing light*, and both at the *first hour of the day*. Still more forcibly will these *accidental* points of agreement strike us, when their own words will have shown us that when they see the *light* they are said to fall in love with Madonna; and that when, by the interposition of the *moon*, it disappears, the Madonna is said *to die*.* We can prove this assertion as to the *first hour* by a reference to their books, and all agree together, no matter in what language they may be written. In the catechism of the first degree, for instance — "What is the hour? — The first hour of a very bright day."† And in the catechism of the *non plus ultra*, "What is the hour? — The first hour of the day."‡

* See the degree called "The white and black eagle," wherein their descent from the Templars is positively asserted. After minutely relating the history of the persecution of the Templars, the hierophant adds: "This is, my most illustrious brother, how and by whom masonry is derived, and has been transmitted to us. You are now a Knight Templar, and on a level with them." (Light on Masonry, p. 286.)

† Les Francs Maçons, &c. p. 259. Amst. 1774.

‡ Light on Masonry, p. 317.

And what day? Not *one*, but *three* days are included — the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the Holy Week; during which time they represent the last supper with the apostles, the death on the cross on Calvary, and the resurrection from the tomb; in the first of these ceremonies, the neophyte of thirty-three years breaks the bread and consecrates the wine;* and then distributes both; and this is supposed to represent the union of Christ with the church, accomplished in the perfect pupil of light, who is both male and female, corresponding with Christ and church. Hence their books, which outwardly overflow with sanctity, teach that in the children of light, Adam dies, and Christ rises again. "As in thee Christ is born and lives, so in thee he ought to rise again. Death must always precede resurrection, hence we must *fall* before we can *rise* again, and so it is with this spiritual resurrection. Christ cannot rise in thee, unless Adam have first died. The inward man will not appear, until the outward man be buried;† the *new spirit* will not come forth, except the *old flesh* be first cast aside; Christ did not ascend into heaven, and put on all his glory, until after his resurrection from the dead; neither can you enter into the glory of heaven until Christ be risen in you. The sons of light alone pass into eternal light; the sons of darkness go into eternal darkness. When Christ rose, he triumphed over death; so, when spiritually, Christ lives in us, we pass from *death unto life* (from error to truth). Christ, when he rose again, gained the victory over Satan, because, by descending into hell, he destroyed his kingdom, spoiled his dominion, and broke his weapons; and so, when Christ rises in us spiritually, Satan can never more prevail; for he has no power over those in whom Christ

* See the whole description of these ceremonies in the degree.

† "Man is double, spiritual and inward, or natural and outward." Swedenburg.

his conqueror lives. If Christ rises in thee spiritually, thou mayst enjoy the company of angels.* Wherever Christ lives and reigns, there angels delight to dwell; wherever sin reigns, there is the devil to be found; wherever Christ is, there is the Holy Spirit."† This kingdom of the Holy Spirit, called also the New Jerusalem, is the ultimate aim of the sect, and their very highest degree is called after the Holy Spirit. The entire design, object and spirit of this secret society, may be discovered by an attentive perusal of the symbolic table in the before-mentioned work, entitled, "Les Francs Maçons," p. 299, where, by emblematic figures, it is explained, that the fox (cunning), after visiting the ape (imitation), and the lion (force), goes first to the pelican, and then to the dove, which, being the bird sacred to Love, is a figure of the kingdom of Love and the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, the boundary of the mystic journey. Hurd, in his treatise on religions, speaks of the brethren of the Rose-Croix (or the *non plus ultra*) thus: "They were to declare openly that the Pope was Antichrist, and that a time would come when they should pull down his triple crown. They rejected and condemned the doctrines of the *Pope and of Mahomet*, calling the one and the other blasphemies of the east and west. They called their society the confraternity *of the Holy Ghost*. They pretended to a right of naming

* See the note G. at the end of the volume.

† Joannis Gherardi Meditat. Sac. London, 1672. The age of the hypocritical Cromwell was particularly fertile in similar allegorical productions in England — the Protector desiring to be known as the founder of Christ's kingdom on earth. We shall see him at the head of the sect which was acting throughout all Europe, under the veil of sacred language. We recollect to have seen this work in the hands of a pious catholic, who was reading it in a holy abstraction; we soon perceived its real nature, and, smiling in silence, we thought of the theologians who wrote that, Dante's poem might be considered a work which would do honour to a holy father. Such is the magic skill of this language!

their successors, and bequeathing to them all their privileges; to keep the devil in a state of subjection; that their confraternity could not be destroyed, because God always opposed an *impenetrable cloud* to screen them from their enemies. They bragged of having invented *a new language*, by which they could describe the nature of every being." (P. 799.)

Although this ancient society, whose first origin is lost in the darkness of time, boasted, through its learned writers, that its great mystery had never been either written or printed, but only confided by oral communications;* and although what we do find printed contains nothing but the symbolic part, still so numerous are the works, ancient as well as modern, which have emanated from this school, that by dint of study and reflection, and by comparing one with another, we may extract all their hidden spirit, without having had any oral communication whatever; and the same rites, which hastily considered, may seem absurdities, will, when maturely judged, be found otherwise: the same thought induced one of their writers to say: "Take away the *spirit* of our mysteries and ceremonies, and they become ridiculous."† This observation will apply to all productions of the same kind, whether poems, romances, comedies, or dialogues.

The historians who treat of the Templars say, that their most secret mysteries were celebrated on Good Friday; and what those mysteries were, we discover from the confessions of those who still carry them on, as their heirs. They are accustomed in these secret rites, to act over the

* So many have written, and Reghellini among the number, "The doctrines and *oral law* of the Philosophic Rite were never written or printed. The mysteries now existing, images of the ancient ones, still preserve this oral law, in which consisted the whole science; and this, the most sacred part, has never been written. We keep up oral institutions, in a number of philosophical orders: thus we have the legend: I keep and conceal." (P. 31. 71. 276.)

† Hutchinson, Spirit of Masonry, p. 171.

events which took place on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of the holy week; and they solemnize with great pomp the resurrection of Christ, the deliverer of mankind, out of the servitude imposed by Satan. Bartolo chose the same three days for the hearing of the cause before the judge Christ, and on Easter-day, the day of the resurrection, he describes that judge proclaiming mankind freed from Satan's power. Dante, from the opening of his poem to the end of his first pilgrimage, spent the same three days in visiting the servants of Satan; on the third day he rose from the dead, and on Easter-day he saw the star of love shining before him.* Boccaccio in the Decameron, says that Neifile dedicated those three days to repose, and that on the Sunday she chose a new place of resort for the gay company to listen to the adventures of Tedaldo degli Elisei, the Florentine poet. Petrarch, who on the 6th of April, at the first hour of the day (being Good Friday), fell in love with Laura; Petrarch who, on Good Friday began to sing the laurel of Scipio, and the victories of Rome over Carthage, was crowned in the Capitol on the very spot where Scipio had received the same honour, on the eighth day of April, at the first hour, being the day of the resurrection; and the laurel he there received was a reward for the laurel he had sung, and transformed into a lady.

> "Arbor vittoriosa e trionfale,
> Onor d' imperadori e di poeti,
> *Vera Donna*, ed a cui di nulla cale
> Se non d'onor che sopra ogni altra mieti." (Son. 225.)

Frequent are the allusions made by every writer of love to this day of resurrection. Guido Orlandi, a Florentine, the author of a work called "La Donna," wrote to his fellow-countryman Guido Cavalcanti, whom Dante remembered as his first friend, that he was desirous of having a muster of armed knights on that day, in order

* See the beginning of the Purgatory.

that their *lady might dwell with God;* and moreover, he wished them to be summoned by the sound of a trumpet, like that golden trumpet, which proclaimed man's deliverance from the tyrant Satan, and his resurrection. To his master Brunetto, Dante sent an enigmatical sonnet as an Easter present, which may be rendered literally thus: "Messer Brunetto, I send you a maiden to spend the Easter with you. But she requires to be read, and does not eat. Do not be too hasty in trying to understand her, and the farther from the noise of a city you may be, the more likely you are to succeed, for it is difficult to comprehend her (Beatrice.) If you are at a loss, you have many Friar Alberts in your society* who will explain what I mean; and if not, apply to Janus and he will soon do it.'

And who was this Janus, who was, as a last resource, to play the Œdipus for Brunetto? "Let us shut the eyes of the head, and open those of the intellect, and consider the image of the double-faced Janus *in the human soul.* The human soul has two lights; the one is natural, and with it the soul looks into itself and into worldly things; the other is divine, and with this it rises to heaven and to God; both these lights shine in the faces of Janus; the divine light in the *young* face, the natural light in the *old* face (the new and the old man.") See Cartari's Immagini degli Dei, p. 50.† and farther on in the same page, he explains who is the God whom the *young* face beholds, in the words of Plutarch: "Among mortals, *Princes* are the images of Gods." Menander tells the same story: "The king is to be considered the living image of God." This Janus with the *young* face, or soul risen to a new life, is figured by Dante as a gentle lady, according to his own confessions; and hence one of the sectarian writers, in

* Albert of Cologne was one of the enigmatical writers in this jargon. Brunetto was a Guelph, and among that party were many disguised sectarians who understood the allegorical language.

† This writer gives us the key to many figures in this language.

conformity with this mystic theory, declared: "The spirits shewed me the human understanding, under the form of a beautiful female; to whom they ascribed a frame active and suited to a life of affections (Love); I cannot describe how they contrived this, but I know that they did it so skilfully, that the angels all applauded them. Some learned men from the earth were present, but they did not comprehend what was meant."* No wonder! Those cunning ones were speaking of their souls, and how they were engraven so deeply with the beloved object, that they two, soul and object were blended into one; they were imagining their souls apart from themselves, as our image is parted from us by a mirror,† and the learned of the earth thought that they were talking all the while of their beloved ladies. No wonder if the deceivers laughed at the credulity of the deceived, as Fiammetta, the soul of Boccaccio, laughed at those of her time who interpreted all those tales literally, which were invented, and decked with feigned names, every one most appropriately suiting the purpose of the writer in placing them there. Homer personified prayers, and these writers personified thoughts. Prayers, the daughters of the heart, were transformed by the Grecian's art into visible and tangible females; and thoughts, the daughters of the mind, became in the hands of these our own writers, visible and tangible females also, loving and beloved. All were alike pupils of the ancient school of Egypt, and as such, their practices differed not.

But we must now return to the Emperor Charles IV. and the Imperialists, whose hopes revived in him, and

* Merv. du Ciel et de l' Enfer de Swedenborg. v. 2. Des Terres Planétaires. Berlin, 1782.

† Virgil himself is nothing more substantial than Dante's love for the Empire; his image personified apart from him, and hence he says to the object "Were I formed of leaded glass, I should not sooner draw unto myself thy outward image, than I now imprint that from within." (Inf. 23.)

make them some amends for this long digression. They had indeed leant upon a reed! History records not a more treacherons coward, or a more devoted and slavish follower of the pontifical behests than this Emperor. After making a progress through the country, which more resembled the visit of a tax-gatherer than of a king, and filling his coffers with the money paid by certain cities for freedom and immunities which he granted at an enormous price, he marched to Rome, and caused the laurel of the Cæsars to be placed on his dishonoured brow; and then after wandering first to one city and then to another, without any direct object in view, promising every thing and performing nothing, flattering many and pleasing none, he finally, at the command of the Pope, recrossed the Alps, pursued by the curses of those whom he had so unworthily deceived. And what resentment, what bitter regrets, what severe reproofs do the letters breathe which Petrarch sent to him when he heard of this disgraceful departure, or rather of this base flight! The poet doubtless felt himself in some manner compromised with the whole party, after having described in the fervid language of the love for which he *laughed and wept, Babylon with her horns broken,* and the triumph of the *lamb over the wolves,* and after having exhorted every one to gird on the sword for Jesus, and tear off the veil which certain Turks had wrapped over the eyes of christians; and after having urged to the enterprize all those who valued the "doctrine of the sacred Helicon." And with what mortification must Bartolo have put aside his description of the forensic cause, brought on before the tribunal of Christ, whom he described as already seated there to declare mankind freed from Satan's tyranny! and Montemagno too, what must he have thought when he saw the glorious deeds of his Christ judge, who was to lay hands on the pastor more especially!

This Montemagno was a poet of talent, whom we may rank at the side of Cino, after our great triumvirate. He

sang a Laura, too, and like Petrarch, played upon the name as only those do who feel no real affection; confounding it with Laurel and L'aura (the air.) In one of his sonnets, he addressed the laurel in sorrow, at perceiving that its glorious leaf was fallen from its ancient honour. And afterwards, in the sure hope of beholding the drooping plant, revived by Charles to him, he wrote a madrigal to him, in which he calls him their sole and desired *salvation!* and prays him to turn his glorious steps towards their Italy. And the base emperor trod that country with the footsteps of shame! Again, in two other sonnets, he exclaimed in an extasy: "The bright and long-expected day is come: The *light* to the eyes and the spirits to the *heart*. The sweet air (*L'aura*) has refreshed my wearied thoughts, and restored me from *death* to *life*. O noble, triumphant, and sacred Laurel, support to my long-drooping thoughts, under whose verdant branches I seek the shade, and weave my amorous lay. In thee have been my hope and desire, since that fortunate day in which Madonna clothed herself in thee."

On the next sonnet, Pionasco annotates: "If Montemagno did write to the Emperor Charles IV. as Pilli (an ancient commentator) boldly declares, it must be confessed that he was his sincere friend." And so he was his friend, and so were all the brightest ornaments of the age, who longed for his coming, and joyfully attended his coronation. They were only too soon undeceived; Montemagno, at the fatal intelligence, addressed the runaway, the *cowardly spectre of a Cæsar*,* in a sonnet which ran thus: "Lord, into thy hands Love has placed all my hopes, peace, and desires, *opening my breast*, and showing me partly his great *valour;* since thy *light* has departed from me, my afflicted and tortured *heart* has been filled with grief and sorrow; thou art gone, leaving

* Expression applied to him by the prior of the holy apostles of Florence, in a letter to his friend Petrarch.

me at war. Still, if *piety* has closed thy soul, if *Fortune* has deprived us of thee*, at least remember me, Lord. Back, sighs, to the *sad heart*, which still with hope loves on, and yet is near to *death*," &c. &c.

The editor of Montemagno's poetry informs us that he found a vast many manuscripts, confused and mixed together with those of his author, which, to the best of his judgment, were written by some other person; and finding that the task of selecting and dividing them was one of great difficulty (Prel. Letter, p. 59), he thought it best to publish them in the same volume. Whoever may have written them, they are all of the same nature, and directed to this Lord, in language which would scarcely have been addressed to a lady, and which plainly shows that they must have been intended for a very high personage.

There never was a country so eager to unite itself under the wings of the eagle as Italy, in the time of Charles IV. Seconded as he was, by all the great and learned of the time, he had only to strike the blow; and instead of doing so, he threw down the weapons which would have insured him the victory. At the first intimation of his coming, many who had seceded from the persecuted party, made their peace with their brethren, and were received again as members of their sect. One, who was a poet, had gone over to the opposite party, and had even made war on *Love*, but he also now laid down the hostile sword, and craved a reconciliation. The remembrance of his former hostility caused this overture to be received with great opposition; and in fact he never would have been readmitted into the sect, had it not been for Petrarch, who hastened to level the obstacles which were raised against the acquisition of so desirable an associate. He recorded this circumstance in two sonnets, which we find

* If we recollect the declarations of Dante and Palingenius, we shall perceive that *Piety* and *Fortune* are synonimous.

placed in his collection, immediately before the two odes on the expedition of Christ against Babylon, of which we have already made mention. In these sonnets (see Sonn. 21, 22.) he addressed him who had returned to his allegiance to Love :

" Amor piangeva, ed io con lui talvolta,
Dal qual miei passi non fur mai lontani,
Mirando, per gli effetti acerbi e strani,
L'anima vostra da' suoi nodi sciolta.
Or ch'al dritto cammin Dio l'ha rivolta,
Col cor levando al cielo ambe le mani,
Ringrazio lui che i giusti preghi umani
Benignamente, sua mercede ascolta.
E se tornando all' *amorosa vita*,
Per farvi al bel desio volger le spalle,
Trovaste per la via fossati e poggi
Fu per mostrar quanto è spinoso calle
E quanto alpestre e dura la salita
Onde al *vero valor* convien ch' uom poggi."

" Più di me lieta non si vide in terra
Nave dall' onde combattuta e vinta,
Quando la gente di pietà dipinta
Su per la riva a ringraziar s'atterra.
Nè lieto più dal carcer si disserra
Chi intorno al collo ebbe la corda avvinta,
Di me, veggendo quella spada scinta
Che fece *al Signor mio* sì lunga guerra.
E tutti voi ch' Amor laudate in rima
Al buon testor degli amorosi detti
Rendete onor, ch' era smarrito in prima.
Chè più gloria è nel regno degli eletti
D'uno spirto converso, e più s'estima,
Che di novantanove altri perfetti." &c. &c.*

And then follows the canzone on Charles's expedition against Babylon. Interpreters have vainly endeavoured

* " I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." (St. Luke, xv. 7.) These are the words spoken by *Christ*, in the chapter which relates to the prodigal son, *who was dead and is alive again*; that is, converted from vice to virtue.

to discover the name of this *weaver of love verses*, who, by returning to a *life of love*, obtained an admittance into the kingdom of the blessed. We do not profess to be better informed on the subject than they are. Some suppose him to be a poet who had fallen in love for the second time, and others explain it to mean a poet who had turned monk; but in both cases, they have found great difficulty in reconciling the apparent discrepancies in the sense. If we suppose that he, whose return to the life of love, was made a matter of rejoicing among those who sang Love's praises in rhymes, was a *poet*, according to the first opinion, how shall we explain that God, *mercifully accepting the prayers of mankind, had directed him into the right way;* viz. the way of love? Can we figure God to ourselves, concerning himself about such trifles as these? And what were those dire effects which had caused him to rebel against Love? And what could Petrarch mean by saying that the *converted spirit* had sheathed the sword which he had so long carried in the wars against his Lord?

If we turn to the other opinion, which makes this reclaimed spirit a poet who had turned monk, the difficulties will increase tenfold. Tassoni, one of the most acute of critics, writes: "This opinion does not satisfy Castelvetro, who thinks that the composition of erotic verses, and a return to a life of love, are equally unsuited to the character of a monk." And he concludes by saying, that those who are credulous enough to believe in the system of Platonic love, may believe, also, that the act of composing verses in praise of Love, and returning to a worldly affection, is to follow the right path, pointed out by God. But who that has not some knowledge of this jargon, could ever dream that this is all feigned love felt for a figurative Christ? To speak candidly, we can scarcely pronounce which is the prevailing quality in these works, confusion or profaneness: which is the most deserving of condemnation, would be a question less difficult to solve.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### CONCLUSION OF THE PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE PLATONIC LOVE.

What would be the first impression made on the mind of a reader, by a perusal of the love-rhymes of our ancient poets? Judging, personally, we are sure that he would exclaim: What language is this—half Pythagorean, half Platonic—which accords so little with our ideas of the passion of love? Did our forefathers express their feelings differently; or has the feeling itself changed its nature in the course of time, that they thus made a parade of the sentiment which, when truly felt, is now uttered but to one? And then, again, the publicity given by these votaries of love to their thoughts, seems to render their obscure and mysterious language quite unnecessary. Is it possible, that such men as these would waste their time in sighing or raving of love, while they were living in days of unexampled political interest; or that, with hearts glowing with love for their father-land, they could forget how much that land required from them, and console themselves by venting their laments in tuneful rhyme? They kept up a regular correspondence with each other, and for what purpose? To relate and explain their visions, and ask the counsel of their friends. And amidst all their vicissitudes, in misfortune, and in

danger; without home, food, or rest; banished, and persecuted; still was this passion sole ruler of the hearts of men who had long passed the days of their youth, and who were celebrated for sense and learning; as Dante, Petrarch, Cino, Cavalcanti, and a hundred others, who followed the fashionable frenzy. What madness was this? Sennuccio del Bene, a friend of Petrarch, and like Dante, an exile, was far advanced in years, when he exclaimed, emphatically: "Love! in spite of my white hairs, thou makest me every day more sensible of thy power! Thou wilt cause me to be considered a foolish old man; and many *will become my enemies;* so that, if I be not speedily aided, I must *die!*" On the death of a sectarian, nearly eighty years old, a brother bard gravely cried: "Weep, ladies; and well may *Love* weep also: weep, lovers, of every land; for our Cino has recently departed from amongst us!"—(Petrarch.) *

There are hundreds of similar effusions; and yet the opinion of the world has undergone no change in regard to these things. Five hundred years ago, as at the present time, the ridicule of society would have pursued any old man who ventured thus to offer himself up, a voluntary sacrifice on the altar of public scorn. Sennuccio confesses that he was afraid of being looked upon as a *foolish old man.* Petrarch tells us, that he himself was a *fable* among the people, in consequence of his passion; and Boccaccio declares, that he was mocked at, and censured. They might have loved in silence; but no; they were not satisfied until they had composed heaps of rhymes, which they circulated everywhere: and then they complained of the remarks of the public! At the beginning of the fourth day of the Decameron, the author complains that he is the mark for public scandal; but he declares his resolution to fight in the service of the ladies; and, therefore, resigns himself to the ridicule and blame

* See the note H. at the end of the volume.

of others, and decides on the prosecution of his undertaking. Omitting his complaints and reproaches, we cite a few of his words on this subject: "Discreet ladies, some who have read these tales, say that, at *my age*, it is not fit that I should thus speak of ladies.* And, while I have been fighting in your service, I have been incessantly pursued and tormented by these atrocious slanders. But, I can assure my defamers, that I shall never, up to my last hour, reproach myself for following those things which Guido Cavalcanti, and Dante Alighieri, and Cino da Pistoja, who are all aged, delight in." We learn two facts from this, and other similar passages: 1st, That the love of these old men was as much ridiculed as it was really incredible; and, 2dly, That Boccaccio's passion was in no respect different from theirs. We will now proceed to show a few illustrations of this love; and, we may remark, the uniformity of the language used by the lovers—no matter at what period they wrote; and the public condemnation of their love, which equalled the public curiosity with regard to its object. Sennuccio has already said: "Love! thou wilt cause me to be looked upon as a *foolish old man*, and wilt make me many enemies."

"I must write softly and secretly, that the mind of the *false speakers* may not comprehend nor discover my state. I jest, and smilingly sing amorous verses for those *false people* who ask me concerning the object of my love." (Ruggieri degli Amici.)—"I stifle my wishes to behold my sweet lady, because the people rebuke me; although, in truth, I see not why my devotion to such a power is deserving of blame." (Fr. degli Albrizzi.)—"Where shall I turn? I am pointed at, accused, and shunned; and all because I cannot free my soul from the *eyes which*

* This is one of the contradictions of Boccaccio. In one of his letters, he says that he was young when he wrote the Decameron; and here he tells us that he composed it when he was of mature age. We must, however, abide by this passage, which was written while the work itself was in progress, and not by the letter, which is of much later date.

have enslaved it. I will resolve to follow my star, and let the foolish multitude speak as they will. They feel neither love nor virtue. I will follow the loveliest and brightest *light* the world e'er saw, and seek not to quit its rays." (Niccolò Tinucci).—" I pray Love to defend me from my traducers, that I may tell how glad I am. But I will hide within me the joy which supports my *life*, for fear of evil speakers. I say, that the noble lord, whom the valiant call *Love*, makes me feel his gentle power within my heart," &c. &c. (Ser Noffo, of Florence).

The following is an extract from a ballad of Guido Cavalcanti, which announces the approach of disasters to the sect: " Thou wilt carry tidings of sorrow and fear; but see that no enemy of *good* discovers thee; for thou wouldst be stopped in thy course.—Ballad, thou seest that *Death* has well nigh deprived me of *life*." And, in these words, he dismisses his most enigmatical canzone of love: " Canzone, thou mayst go where thou wilt in safety; for I have so adorned thee, that those who have understanding will, doubtless, praise thy dress; and thou wilt feel no desire to abide with others." Dante's ode, in the Convito, which he declares to have been written for the daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, the Pythagorean *light*, concludes in the same style: " Canzone, very few persons will understand thy strong and difficult language; therefore take courage, when thou goest among those who are not aware of thy nature."

What is this love which was so jealously concealed, because its votaries were so vituperated? Barberini, who wrote two large volumes on it, says: " Those who are lovers, know what I mean; and I have no intention of enlightening those who are not. I speak in this guise, because oftentimes it happens that these things are read by people who are not worthy of being spoken to more openly. And I, who fear those people, am resolved not to write down what I really think." The same author thus speaks of the object, or lady, of this love: " Take

notice, that you will hear this lady spoken of in different parts of the book; and you, who are used to this *gentle language*, will have grace given you from God to comprehend the real nature of this mysterious female. You will remark, that she will appear to me in divers new forms and figures, * and sometimes will display one virtue, and sometimes another; so that, by her appearance, the *very acute* observer will know her; and highly favoured are those to whom this grace is given."

Barberini meets several ladies, and asks them: "Tell me, ladies, have you seen a lady pass by, whose nature, name, and country, are, and will be, a mystery; until, according to her promise, she unveils her figure, and shows herself so distinctly that the wise will identify her by her face and language?" The ladies, who are going in quest of this very person, answer: "We were going to ask you if you knew a lady, whom we saw here only for a moment. As we were lately passing by a *garden*, we beheld a lady folded in a *veil*, and standing at the side of a *fountain*." A messenger here passes by, crying: "I am the messenger of this much-sought lady; and I am sent with a trumpet into many lands, to wake up those people who have been blinded by ignorance."

Dante still more openly exalts her to the skies, for her unspeakable qualities; saying, that, as the sun lights up physical objects, "So she, with the *light* of her *countenance*, shines on the *heart* of the *gentle* and *valiant*; and every one honours her, because she is the *perfect*

* *These divers forms and figures* are the various ways of considering the same thing under different aspects. In the Filocopo, for instance, Dante is described under several figures. The Ghibelline founder of the new and apostolic jargon, becomes St. James. The soul of the *White* of Florence is transformed into the lady Whiteflower, who was born on the pilgrimage to St. James. The antipapalist, subject to the Pope, who keeps his mind locked up under Egyptian figures, is turned into the subject of the ruler of Babylon, who keeps Whiteflower, shut up from every eye, in an Egyptian tower: and so with other things.

*light* which fills the *minds* of her *lovers* with *virtue*. O false and wicked knights! foes to her who may be likened to the *prince of the stars!*"

Dante da Majano entertained a similar idea of her: "O flower of ladies, thy mien is most noble! Bright orb, which lights the world! Chief of enamoured dames! Queen above every other crowned! In my heart, I bear the image of thy majesty! Grant me, then, thy aid, ere I *die!*"

Jacopo da Lentino compares her with the eagle, and describes her dominions: "My heart is wounded by her beauty; but I dare scarcely hope that love has entered the soul of a *warrior eagle*. — And, with the *name*, thou hast the power to give sentence against thy enemies, like the city of Rome!"

Jacopo Pugliesi da Prato, a knight of the Holy Roman Empire, determines the extent of her kingdom: "Canzone, go to her who, as a goddess, holds every other lady in subjection, from Germany to Aquileia; that kingdom richer than all others!"

Gianni Alfani, one of the many exiled Florentines, believed that his lady had the power to put an end to his banishment: "If the lady of my mind would deign to succour her servant, I might now be recalled from my banishment; but I fear that she thinks not of me. O my sighs! tell the story of my woes to the ladies of gentle hearts; and may they humbly seek to incline the heart of her who is able to do every thing for me!"

Cecco d'Ascoli, too, will tell us many wonderful things of this same lady, in confirmation of those we have already heard: "Increasing and changing in her degree, to the world she is but *one*. She commenced her flight in the *east*. To redeem mankind from the effects of our first parents' sin, she takes the form of a *pelican;* and delivers us who were in slavery and *death*, raising us to the *life* which we forfeited when we sinned."

Wonderful, indeed, were the effects produced by this

love: the lover was transformed into the beloved object; or, in other words, men became women.

"O Great Love, who fillest the thoughts of thy servants, and by thy virtue dost *transform man into the thing he loves:* sweet passion, *life of the dead*, and *death of the unworthy*," &c.—Barberini.

"I was the devoted servant to the mighty Love, and subjected to *her* power; I took her very form."—Pannuccio dal Bagno Pisano.

"By her my every thought is moved, for my soul has taken the likeness of her beautiful form."—Dante.

"When through the *eyes* the lady image reaches the heart, all else is banished thence.—I remembered this, when one day I saw two lovers transformed, and do what I am accustomed outwardly to do.—I can tell how the lover transforms himself into the beloved object.—I cannot transform myself into her, more than I am now at this present time."—Petrarch.

This is the only example we take from Petrarch, lest we should spoil the scene of his solemn transfiguration in Laurel or Laura, which he describes both in Latin and in Italian. We shall find that, in every age, this miracle was worked in the third heaven, among the princes of piety. Hence Cecco d'Ascoli, Dante's friend, exclaims:—"I am in the third heaven, transformed into *this lady.*—*My understanding* took her form, and gazing upon her, I saw salvation in her eyes. Therefore *I* am *she;* and if she leaves me, I shall fall into the shadow of *death.*"—Acerba, B. 3. ch. 1.

It is very singular how all these mysteries have been preserved and carried down from these remote times unimpaired. In the last century, Swedenburg wrote the very same things, viz.: that human intellect assumes a female form; and while the spirits were instructing him in this mystery, he says that the wise ones of our earth were looking on, unable to take in their meaning. From this theory, sprang all those ways of speaking, which,

apparently absurd and devoid of meaning, to the common reader, conveyed a very intelligible lesson to the sectarians; as for instance:—

"*Lady*, will God say to me, when my soul stands before him, what claim have you?"—Guido Guinizelli.

And in a dialogue between Barberini and the veiled lady we read:—

*Lady*. I command thee to become a man once more.

*Barberini*. I shall only return to my original state.

*Lady*. Now, write then how that *I was* a man.

Pierozzo Strozzi wrote to announce to Niccolò Soldanieri that he was on the eve of a departure; and in answer to his sonnet, Soldanieri sent him a canzone, which begins: "*O lady*, thy departure grieves me much."*

Guido Orlandi, in the sonnet "Onde si muove, e dove nasce Amore?" asks Cavalcanti the nature of Love: "What is Love? Has he a form apart, or does he resemble another? Is he *life* or *death?* Those who serve him must know his nature; and therefore to you, Guido, I come for advice, because I hear that you are often *at his court*."

The answer is contained in that celebrated and mysterious ode, wherein Cavalcanti begins by calling Orlandi, *Lady*.

All these ladies were made after the likeness of the great lady, her shadows and images: "I saw other ladies with my own lady, who were like her shadow. In this, I do not praise her beyond the truth, nor do I blame the others, if *I am understood*."—Cavalcanti.

These images were as little like *ladies* as was the *great lady herself;* hence Dante declared that he did not speak to all ladies, but only *to those who are not females;* and hence Barberino: "Be it known that I speak for the *ladies* in whose service this book is written. And pardon me, O *ladies;* for this *one* of whom I have spoken as a *lady*, is not one, nor do I wish her to be counted among females."

* See Redi's works, vol. 6. p. 152.—Ed. de Class. Ital.

Boccaccio wrote the Decameron in the service of these same ladies; and he thought on them when he foretold that those for whom he wrote his tales would not think them immoral, but the reverse; these ladies knew that the lady, whose shadow and image they were, resembled Love and Love *her;* as his Amorosa Visione declares; as Dante in the Vita Nuova declares; and as Egidio della Colonna declares, in his explanation of Cavalcanti's mysterious canzone, addressed to the *Lady*, Guido Orlandi.

A troop of commentators entered the lists, for the honour of illustrating this single ode; and on a few verses they composed long treatises on *love*, which they defined to be a science and an art. Jacopo Mini, Plinio Tomacelli, Girolamo Frachetta, Dino del Garbo, Paolo del Rosso, and Egidio della Colonna, are the most noted of these interpreters, whose comments are nearly as hard to understand as the original text; but by comparing them, and bearing always in mind that, by the jargon, is the jargon explained, we may, without fail, obtain a glimpse of light through their means. In our remarks on this first friend of Dante (as the poet himself calls Cavalcanti), we purpose examining this canzone, and at the same time we shall relate the story of his adventures with the Lady of Toulouse, with whom he fell in love while on a pilgrimage to St. James of Galicia: then we shall see *who* or *what* was this lady, the fellow-citizen of Dante's Statius, whose eyes so perfectly resembled those of a lady whom Cavalcanti had left in Italy. Such are the fantastic conceits with which the rhymes of our sober and learned poet-lovers are filled! Fooleries too insignificant to be worthy of the condescension of stern criticism! Those who wrote so obscurely of love, not only recommended others to do the same, but taught how it was to be done, by using the double or veiled language.* Long

* This language went by the various names of *subtle, flowery, honest, noble, beautiful, hard*, &c. &c.

and manifold were the treatises written on this science, in almost every tongue; but as we intend, on a future occasion, to examine the most remarkable of them, we shall confine our present remarks to one precept, taken from Barberini. In the second part of the *Documenti d'Amore*, under the head of *Industry* (which industry is a lady sent by Love to work figured purses), it is written: "We ought sometimes to make use of the *veiled* language, and industry will teach us to find out the dark riddles."*

"As rules admit into every kind of knowledge, so we, to enter, must make use of dark riddles, which we do not intend to make intelligible to those who are not with us. Let none pretend to say that Love does not mean to speak of ladies in this treatise, because he has chosen to reserve another book for them, † for he has, according to the rules laid down, spoken on every occasion of ladies, even when discoursing on those things which relate only to *men*," &c. &c.

These are a few specimens of the childish follies which were written by those grave and learned men, lawyers, physicians, philosophers, theologians, and poets, in order to show others how to express themselves in the dark and mysterious science of love, without danger! But was all this precaution necessary in the affairs of every-day-love? May we not apply to this so much vaunted science the words of Milton: —

> ——"That hath been thy craft,
> By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
> But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
> Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
> Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
> And not well understood, as good not known?"

* The glossaries, of which this work often makes mention, are all wanting. They gave an explanation of the riddles, &c. in this double language. For them were substituted the comments, such as the Vita Nuova and the Convito, with regard to the Comedia.

† The "Reggimento delle Donne," which is throughout in strict connexion with the "Documenti d'Amore."

We may trace, throughout all these works, whether they treat of love or other subjects, a certain correspondence of ideas, a uniformity of imageries and fictions, which clearly show their common origin from one school. In every thing written by Dante, whether it be prose or verse, we find the same thoughts constantly recurring, and the same expressions used; a sure proof of the singleness of the object in view. Two examples of this fact, briefly cited, will suffice for our present purpose.

1. In the Vita Nuova, he writes that, much wishing to sing of love; and finding himself placed between conflicting opinions, he determined on taking a common road, which would be agreeable to all parties; and he did so, by throwing himself into the arms of his enemy, Piety. At the beginning of the *Credo*, he says, that having wasted his time, and to no purpose, in singing of love, he has withdrawn himself from that *false love*, and made up his mind to sing of *God as a Christian*, and behold him again in the arms of Piety. In the Convito, he writes that, although very much inclined to sing of love, he thought it best to wait for a time; and therefore showed his own condition, under the figure of other things; knowing well that his hearers were not in the mood to believe the real meaning of his words so well as the false one. To these instances of concord, we may add his correspondence with Cino, and several other passages from the Convito, his own words inscribed on his tomb, and the whole of the Commedia, which was the fruit of the resolution he had taken.

2. In his letter to Henry, he says, that by his means he hoped to pass from confusion to tranquillity — from his exile in Babylon to the New Jerusalem. "As we now weep in sorrow our exile from holy Jerusalem to Babylon, so then, citizens and free, we shall in peace and cheerfulness think over all the miseries of our present confusion." In the penitential psalms, we find various and frequent allusions to the rebuilding of Jerusalem

and the return of her people. In the Convito (p. 103), where he speaks of the different meanings to be given to the same passage, he takes us back to this old subject of slavery and freedom. "In that song of the prophet which says, 'When Israel came out of Egypt,' &c., the words are true, taken literally, and they are not less true according to their spiritual meaning, which is this: When the soul is released from sin, it is made holy and free in its power;" and this soul afterwards is made "a lady, free in her dominion, which is reason." In the letter on the poem, written to Can Grande, he approaches his real meaning still more closely. He speaks of the different senses in which the Commedia may be interpreted. "The first meaning may be called *literal*, but the second is allegorical or moral; and, treated in this sense, we may consider it in the verse: When Israel came out of Egypt — Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion;" and he says that, besides its literal meaning, that passage signifies the redemption of mankind by Christ, and the release of the soul "from the slavery of this corruption to the eternal freedom of glory." In the Monarchia, this Saviour becomes an Emperor,* and, for this anointed Roman prince, he exclaims: "Why do the heathen so furiously rage together against the Lord and against his anointed." In the poem, this change from Egypt to Jerusalem is mentioned frequently; for instance —

> "Here are the treasures tasted, that with tears,
> Were in the *Babylonian exile* won,
> When gold had failed them." (Par. 23.)

And again, where Beatrice speaks of her lover —

> ——— "And, ere his term
> Of warfare, hence permitted he is come,
> From *Egypt to Jerusalem*, to see," &c. (Par. 25.)

* Perhaps it is better to wait for the coming of our Saviour.

Shortly before this, he who makes "Galicia thronged with visitants," to show us clearly who was the head of this Jerusalem and its court, thus speaks to Beatrice's lover :

> "Sith our *liege*
> Wills of his grace, that thou, or e'er thy death,
> In the *most secret council with his lords*
> Shouldst be confronted, so that having view'd
> The glories of *our court*, thou mayst therewith
> Thyself, and all who hear, invigorate
> With hope that leads to blissful end."

The real name of this Egypt, from whose bondage he hoped to escape to Jerusalem, is formally declared in the following passage from the poem, which has already been explained by the author, both in the Convito and in the letter to Can Grande. He arrives at the base of the mountain on whose summit he is to meet the personified Jerusalem, and there he beholds a bark approaching from the place "where Tyber's wave grows salt," and filled with spirits who are singing. We have said that they came from the Tyber ; now let us hear from themselves the name of the place whence they came :

> "'*In exitu Israel de Egypto,*'
> All with one voice together sang, with what
> In the remainder of that hymn is writ." (Canto 2).

We have said elsewhere, that the three canzoni of the Convito explain, in an inverse order, the three parts of the Commedia ; and this we have from the author himhimself. One of those spirits, who had come from *Rome* or *Egypt*, sings, at Dante's request, the second canzone of the Convito —

> "Love, that discourses in my thoughts,"

which corresponds with the Purgatory of the poem. The princes of piety, in the third heaven, cite the first

canzone of the Convito, which corresponds with the Paradise —

" O ye, whose intellectual ministry moves the third heaven —"

The poet feared to bring the Inferno into question by connecting it with the third canzone of the Convito, and therefore was silent as to their relative signification.

In spite of these ties of mutual dependance, Dante's poem has baffled every research into its nature; and we repeat that two circumstances have occasioned this difficulty; — first, the conventional language, which says one thing and means something else all the while; and secondly, the mixture of truth with falsehood, the first being expressed darkly, and the last in clear terms. To these two artifices, Lorenzo Ventura, the Venetian, ascribes all the difficulties of the jargon of which he himself made so much use. His work offers this departure from the language of love and religion already examined by us, that in it, man is described to be a *stone*, which gradually, from a state of roughness and coarseness, becomes fine and polished.* All that we have hitherto said on the subject of Platonic love, has been merely preliminary to a more severe and methodical examination of its nature. It is not with a small force that we can hope to vanquish a colossal opinion, which has grown firm from its apparent reality, and which the lapse of many ages, and the consenting voice of nations, have consolidated. We are aware that to some, a few hints suffice: they no sooner start from the post, than they reach the destined goal; but there are others more incredulous and diffident, who feel themselves entitled to receive substantial and valid proofs. The first join a writer, nay, sometimes outrun him, in his search after truth; the last follow him unwillingly, watching for the obstacles he may find in his path; and we shall esteem

* De Lapide Philosophorum, p. 6 & 7. Basil, 1571.

ourselves indeed fortunate if we can succeed in reconciling them to the impoverishment of Love's kingdom, by the abduction of so many ladies, whom we in after ages have loved far better than did their contemporary suitors. Sure in our own minds of being able to prove all our assertions, and fulfil every promise we have here given, we only entreat our unpersuadable critics to suspend their judgment until we have done. Should this request be denied us, we must resign ourselves to the fate which inevitably attends all who strike out of the long-beaten track, whatever may be their motive for endeavouring to open another. We decline citing any examples, lest we should be charged with presumption, in putting ourselves on a level with those great men, who, after being loaded with calumny during their lives, are now lauded to the skies. Much still remains for our consideration in the works of Dante, before we shall be satisfied that our task is accomplished; but surely we may at least flatter ourselves with the hope of having clearly proved that his poem, outwardly religious, is inwardly political; and that his love for Beatrice was not real but allegorical. We feel no doubt remaining on the subject in our own minds; but, if there be any one who can prove us to be deceived, we shall welcome our release from error most joyfully, and more especially if courtesy soothes the arguments which are to convince us.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### ON THE EXTENSION OF THE SECRET SCHOOL.

If we explore the secret recesses of ancient literature, what else shall we find there but one vast conspiracy of the learned against the Roman hierarchy? What else shall we see but cunning struggling against cruelty, hatred dressed in the garb of friendship, and hypocrisy turning the weapons of force against itself? Hence the mock sanctity which looks so like true religion; hence the profaneness which is taken for holiness. In every country of Europe, arms of various kinds were forged, and all to wound the same object; and the activity and vast number of the assailants will be proved by ascertaining the variety of forms in which these arms were issued from the different manufactories. Works of every size, in every language, written in verse and in prose, on literary and philosophical subjects of all kinds, with every variety of *outward* meaning, and with but *one* inward design, were published by this secret school; and often those which appear the most simple, are the most mysterious.

But here arises a difficulty, which, at first sight, seems insurmountable. How is it that no ancient historian has revealed any of these things? Is it credible, that secrets which were trusted to so many, would never be betrayed — that all would be faithful to their trust? To

this we might answer, that many are the sects, both ancient and modern, of whose final aim we are as ignorant as of the real nature of their veiled mysteries; that we know but very little about the priesthood of Eleusis, or that of Egypt, whose pupils were so innumerable; and that their secret language and their mystic characters still exercise all our curiosity. But we assert that these secrets *were* known to a very great number of persons, and that they were faithfully kept for reasons which we have the means of explaining.

That many understood the conventional jargon is sufficiently obvious, from the number of writers who made use of it. Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Cino, Barberini, Bartolo, Fazio degli Uberti, Frezzi and Palingenius, were the chiefs who marshalled on a long train of admiring imitators. After all that we have shown with regard to them, it seems a work of supererogation even to agitate such a question. For can there be a doubt, that if so many wrote in this mystic style, a still greater number must have been able to understand it? What is the language in which readers do not outnumber writers? Supposing it otherwise, what ridiculous folly, what a loss of time and trouble would it have been, to make use of so much deep artifice, with the certainty of never being understood, except by a few brother authors. The uniformity of the same style in the different writers, shows that one and the same school instructed them all, and a knowledge of the doctrines of that school will prove that they were conformable with the opinions of all who used the jargon. Long and methodical treatises, in this secret science, have been composed, as we before said, in every language; and their abundance, not their scarcity, embarrasses us in our choice. Where are they then? — Before our eyes; side by side with the poems we have been examining; seen and read by all, understood by a very few.

We read in history that secret societies of various de-

nominations spread themselves in those times. We well know that the punishment of the stake awaited the disciples of those societies, in the event of a discovery; and surely we remember how the Templars suffered imprisonment, torture, and the flames even, rather than reveal the mysteries and rites they had sworn always to guard. The silence, fortitude and constancy, with which they endured the most cruel torments and death, all these are recorded by Boccaccio in terms of unqualified praise, and *our* army* (as he always calls them) are held up by him as models for the imitation of others. Nor did these severities crush the school to which they belonged: the survivors, in their wanderings throughout Europe, carried their mysteries with them; and at this time, there are hundreds of thousands who boast themselves the heirs of their doctrines. Can it be seriously disputed whether these unhappy sectarians had or had not a certain language wherein they corresponded with a view to deceive their persecutors? Their grand secret consisted in wearing the uniform of their enemy, mixing in his ranks, and then striking when every blow fell with sure effect. Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered affords an admirable illustration of this art.

The existence of such a style of language is an historical fact affirmed by many, and denied by none; it is a not less notorious fact that the persecuted sect conformed in public to the language and ceremonies of the persecuting religion; while they gave in secret to every sentence of that language, and to every act of those ceremonies, an arbitrary and conventional meaning, corresponding with their own designs. There is scarcely a contemporary or succeeding historian who does not tell

* See the *Casi degli Uomini Illustri*, towards the end, where he speaks of the Templars. He calls them *our army*, apparently in opposition to the ancient martyrs; but this is the talisman which deceives the world.

us that the Patarini, or Cathari, or Albigenses, were Manicheans; and we know that Silvanus, one of the successors of the murdered Manes, so artfully used that doctrine "that it seemed all drawn from the Scriptures, as they are received by catholics. He affected to make use of Scriptural phrases, and he spoke like the most orthodox among us, when he mentioned the baptism, death, burial or resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." And he and his proselytes did all this so cunningly that "the Manicheans seduced numbers of people; and their sect was considered by the simple-minded to be a society of Christians, who made profession of an extraordinary perfection." These are the words of the Abbé Pluquet (Dict. des Hérés. art. Silvan and Manicheans), who traced the existence of this sect in Italy as far back as 1022, when many of them were discovered and burned for the love of God. Let us hear the same author describe the actions of later sectarians after other innumerable examples of inhuman cruelty. "The *Clanculars* were a society of anabaptists who taught that *on religious subjects* it was necessary to speak *in public like other men*, and only *in secret* to express the thoughts." And the Albigenses and Manicheans show the best means of succeeding in this design with the following fact.

Persecuted incessantly by the remorseless Inquisition, one of their chiefs had recourse to a cunning device. He knew that he and his friends were accused of refusing to worship the saints, and of denying the supremacy of the Romish church, and that they would be forced to make a profession of faith and to swear by the *Holy Mary* to have no other religion than that of the *Holy Church*. He was resolved not to betray his inward sentiments, but he desired, if possible, to escape *death*. "O, muses! O, high genius! now vouchsafe your aid!" He shut himself up in a cave with two aged females of his own sect, and gave the name of *Holy Church* to the one, and *Holy Mary* to the other, "in order that, when the sectarians

were interrogated by the Father Inquisitors, they might be able to swear by the *Holy Mary* that they held no other faith than that of the *Holy Church.*" Hence, when we desire to estimate properly the devout and holy things written in those times, we must first consider who composed them; and thus we shall be able to reconcile the frequent contradictions which are apparent between the verses and the actions of the Troubadours and Trouveurs.

*Eon de l'Etoile*, a sectarian chief, gave himself out for Jesus Christ, who was coming to judge the living and the dead; and, to strengthen this fiction on some foundation, he called twelve of his principal scholars *Apostles*, and all the others *angels;* and one of them was called *Judgment*, another *Wisdom*, another *Dominion*, &c. From this we may always understand what these hypocrites meant, when, preaching to the people with an outward aspect of inspiration and sanctity, they announced that the Saviour was coming with his *wisdom* and his *dominion*, surrounded by *angels* and *apostles*, to judge the *living* and the *dead* in the day of approaching judgment. (Pluquet.) This all took place before Dante's time; and, in his age, it was even worse. The sectarians conformed to all the observances of the Romish church, to every established form, and to its language; in short, to the whole of the outward worship; and yet, far from betraying their secret opinions by so doing, they strengthened them greatly. The thing is simple: they gave to every part a spirit of contradiction, an opposing sense, which rebounded against the rites they were pretending to honour. We know that Manicheism is founded on two opposite principles. When those sectarians followed the religion of the Pope, they always understood that they were paying homage to the God of Evil and Hatred, opposed to the God of Good and Love: "*Because the mass is an invention of Satan.*" (Pluquet.) And with this understanding, the same hypocrisy was practised more than ever in the age of Dante, Petrarch

and Boccaccio, when the sectarians "invoked demons to obtain favours from them. This was a crime which had become common in Catalonia in the fourteenth century; they worshipped *Satan with all the ceremonies used by catholics.*" (Leon. Gallois, Hist. Abregée de l'Inq. p. 59. Paris, 1824.) By such means, at the very time when they appeared most devout catholics, their enmity was raging the fiercest; they were identifying the Pope's religion with the doctrines of Satan, and the Pope himself with the Satan whom he was serving. He commanded them to acknowledge *one* holy catholic mother church, and we have seen how they obeyed him. He ordered them to profess the creed of the apostles, and, in public, they bent the knee and recited the articles one by one; and, in secret, gave to those articles a conventional sense, by which, God in three persons and one essence, became a figure of man, triple in powers, one in essence; and so the Verb made flesh, was INTELLECT incarnate in man; the dead and risen Christ was man oppressed by error and raised again to truth, and so on. The Pope, armed with his thunders, cried: Hatred and death to the enemies of Christ and his holy church; and the sectarians repeated his words even more loudly. Renounce Satan and all his works, cried the one; and the others re-echoed this also, while the Pope exulted in his triumph. The historian relates these practices as existing in Catalonia, where the persecuted first took refuge when chased from their own bloodstained city; but, by the miserable survivors of these slaughters, they were afterwards carried into many other countries.

We have long since cited the words of Ivan of Narbonne, where he says that in whatever city, province or kingdom he arrived, whether in France, Italy, or Germany, he was always recognised by means of the same signs: this sufficiently proves that the signs were uniform every where, and known by persons of different languages and countries, without limitation of numbers. In secret

and persecuted societies, the signs are always in strict union with the language, which is in itself a sign. The first protect the present; the last offer to those who are parted the opportunity of carrying on a correspondence without danger. And it would be even less absurd, because we are now ignorant of the nature of those signs, to declare that they never existed; than it would be to assert, because until now we were unaware of the nature of the language, that therefore, no such language was ever in use, while the fact is, that it was not only in use, but in constant practise by a great many persons. We *believe* that the first were employed, from a mere historical assertion; but we *know* that the last existed, not only from history, but by an examination into facts, by the testimony of many witnesses, and by the conviction of our own reason. In all probability, their signs will never be discovered, because the dead return not to shew us their actions; (if indeed they differ from the signs used at present, which we much doubt); but their language is before our eyes, the dead still speak to us in their writings; and can we refuse to believe what we see and feel, and read? Or shall we still doubt on, after we have shown that the language of those times scarcely differed from the one now in use among their heirs and descendants; and after these heirs shall have demonstrated that Dante was a professor of their school, by solid arguments and an analysis of his mystic figures? We will produce this evidence, although it will deprive us of the honour of being considered the discoverer of what, in point of fact, was known long ago. Those who had merged their common ideas into those of the secret schools, found but little difficulty in comprehending what to us is so puzzling. It was to those who complained of the obscurity of poets, that Boccaccio said: "I hold that those who talk so loudly, have the eyes of bats rather than of men. Let them cast off the old man, and put on the new, and then what now seems dark will be clear and easy."

The attention of the reader was guided to the secret truth by the warnings he received, whenever an important fiction was about to be introduced, as for instance, the apostrophe of Dante to those of *sound intellect*; and again his hint in the Purgatory: *Reader, make thine eyes piercing for the truth*, (c. 8.); and: *Reader, thou seest how my subject rises* (c. 9.) To say nothing of his allusions to the gospels and the psalms, in connection with the last judgment; and his citation of Ezekiel, and St. John, in that most important scene of the poem, where the two allegorical females are brought contrasted to our view! right well did he know how to direct the sheep and the archpriest Bernard to the wolf's den, that they might enter and crush his head! It is not his fault if the world persists in not recognizing Beatrice; after the countless tokens he has given of her real nature, and after the *female* whom he put in opposition to her, so impossible to be mistaken! Doubtless he expected (and no wonder!) from the most shallow of his critics, at least this admission: that if one female was an allegory, the other was one likewise. But not so; all saw that one of the ladies was a man, but none could discover that the other was a man also; and critics of acuteness of judgment have really persuaded themselves that the Pope stole the church (for they all gave this interpretation to Beatrice's car,) from a Florentine lady, and Dante is blamed for this!

These writers were placed in difficult circumstances! aware that in their own ranks there were many traitors, more or less initiated according to their degree, in the allegorical language; they were compelled to use an extra vigilance in their references, in order to mislead and perplex them; and for the same purpose, it appears that many of their compositions, and in particular the keys to those compositions, although as abstruse as they could be made, were explained to the most tried and experienced of their brethren only. For instance, in the Vita Nuova,

Dante divides one of his canzoni (meaning the Commedia) into several parts, and at the same time expresses his fear lest any of those domestic traitors should get possession of the secret of his hieroglyphics. "In order that this canzone may be better understood, I will divide it more artfully than the others; to be fully comprehended, it should be still more minutely divided—but I have no wish to enlighten those who cannot understand it with the divisions I have already made; and I fear indeed that I have disclosed its meaning to too many already, if they should happen to hear it." The canzone is, "Donne, che avete intelletto d' Amore."

And with these whiskered *ladies* who had an intellect of *love*, churches, tribunals, and in short every place understood. For them, Dante wrote his *pious* poem, and for them, scattered his guiding references throughout the Vita Nuova. "When I say *my pious canzone*, I speak to *this* one, and I tell it to what *ladies* I mean it to go." (p. 50.) "Certain words in the sonnet were put there on my lady's account, as will be evident *to those who understand them*." (p. 11.) "I call upon the votaries of love *to understand me*." (p. 53, &c. &c.) In one place he speaks of a great sectarian mystery, which we shall elsewhere take upon ourselves to explain by the aid of their mystic works; and perceiving that his words would not be understood even partially, by those who were ignorant of the conventional idiom, he wrote: "In that part where I explain the cause of this sonnet being written, there will be found many words of doubtful import; for instance, when I say that love kills all my spirits, except the spirits of the face which remain *in life*, but away from their instruments (the eyes); none but those of a certain *degree* among the faithful can solve this; they will comprehend it clearly; but I do not explain my words, because it would be *vain* or *superfluous*," p. 23.—*vain* to those who were ignorant of the mystery, *superfluous* to those who were in the secret,

from having acquired an "intellect of love" in the third heaven; to these last he wrote the ode:

Voi che, intendendo, il Terzo Ciel movete.

And they were in possession of the mysterious alphabet which will show us the meaning of the word *Comedia*.

In his comment on this canzone of the Convito, which corresponds with the Paradise of the poem, Dante informs us, but always in the same mystic jargon, that the emperor of the universe presided over a very numerous court: this intelligence was given to encourage the hopes of the sectarians, by shewing them the extent of their force, and the number of their pupils, whom he divides into nine classes. After speaking of this "Emperor of the universe which is Christ, the son of God and the son of the virgin Mary,* the daughter of Joachim and of Adam, *true man*," (Conv. p. 112); he adds that "his spouse and secretary, of whom Solomon sang,† says, thinks and preaches that his creatures will become innumerable; she divides them into three holy or divine principalities or hierarchies; and these again into three orders; so that the church (that is, the secretary to the emperor of the universe,) contains nine orders of spiritual creatures." He says further, that as these nine degrees are divided into three hierarchies, so the divine majesty, in three persons and one substance, may be triply considered; and from himself we shall hear how he identifies Beatrice, whom he declares to be the Holy Trinity, three in one, with God.

It is but reasonable to suppose that the sectarian hierarchy of those days, was, to say the very least, as

* The same who has already figured as the intercessor for man, in Bartolo's cause. This Mary was by our Adam regenerated to a new life.

† He afterwards calls this Secretary the *Holy Church*; but we have shewn that the Patarini gave this name to their own sect; and then went boldly before the inquisitors, and swore to believe every thing that the church taught.

numerous as that of our own time; and that its angels, who had the "intellect of love," understood more or less, according to their degree, the force of the conventional language we are now examining. To show how far this supposition is correct, we will here quote a few words from the canzone of love, written by Barberino on the death of Henry VII.; prefixed to it, we find the following declaration: "Barberino wrote this *obscure work*, on the *nature of love*, to be understood *only* by certain of his friends, noble Tuscans." "*Let none be* surprised if I speak obscurely, for *fortune* has compelled me to do so. I speak, *lords*, to you, the *wise* and *veiled*, that you may understand me, for there are but few of you *ladies* to whom my mind would disclose its love." The last strophe runs thus: "This lament is of such a nature that it cannot be understood by those who are not of *subtle mind*, nor even by these, until they have *wounded their heart*,"* &c. "*Thus clothed* thou mayst go amongst those who will never *understand thee;* but to such as are ready to welcome thee, hasten, and open, and unfold thyself. Thou wilt know if they be the same with whom I converse, by seeing them *bend the forehead to the feet*:† remain with them, and in honour of this (Tal) Lord, let there be weeping everywhere" (the words in which the canzone is dismissed).

* We have a minute description of the high sectarian degree, in which it was a part of the ceremony to open the breast with a chisel. Montemagno alludes to this ceremony in his sonnet to the emperor Charles: "Lord, in thy hands Love has committed my hopes, peace and desires, gently *opening my breast*, and showing me partly his great valour."

† Another sectarian sign, of which we shall speak elsewhere.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ON THE ANCIENT INTERPRETERS OF DANTE'S POEM.

Among the members of the sectarian hierarchy, we may reckon, without a doubt, the first interpreters, annotators, critics, and apologists, of the great work of Alighieri. They understood its secret meaning, and often explained it too, but in their own conventional language. Boccaccio is one of these interpreters. After our notices on this writer's works, after seeing how often he wrote the sectarian life of Dante, can we doubt that he knew his poem *within* and *without*? Then why did he not annotate it *truly* instead of *falsely*, by which he deceived many who followed his footsteps in implicit faith? The answer to this question is very simple; and we may add, that he did not always in his commentary disguise the truth from those who understood him. We have already seen how cunningly he identified Florence with Dis, and by similar artifices he explained many other difficulties. In fact, how could he not be aware of Dante's meaning, when in all his own works, he equalled or exceeded him in severity? We should affront the memory of the most careless reader, by repeating here all that we have before said and proved of Boccaccio's opinions.

We have many reasons to conclude that the other interpreters understood equally well the full value of what

they either kept secret, or else explained in enigmas. They all declare, with him, that the she wolf, from whose persecutions Virgil saves Dante, is a figure of avarice. So said the anonymous interpreter before Boccaccio; so said Landino after him; and assuredly they both knew very well that the *she wolf* was none other than the *woman*, and that the *greyhound* who was to destroy her, was identical with the *messenger* of God, who was to slay that woman; let us see whether our assertion be well founded.

The anonymous commentator makes the following note, on the passage where Beatrice, in the earthly paradise, foretels that a messenger from God, the heir of the eagle, will destroy the thief who robbed her of her car: "The messenger of God who is to bring the world back to God; this agrees with the passage in the first canto of the Inferno, which says that he will chase her through every city, until he drives her back into hell again."* This *he* is the greyhound, who was thus to punish the wolf. The annotator knew then, that the woman and the wolf signify the pope; and that the greyhound and the heir of the eagle figure the emperor. The editors of the last Paduan edition here remark justly, that this circumstance is of great weight with those who are aware that this commentator was a friend of Dante's. We have his own authority for this: "I, the writer, heard Dante say, that poetry never seduced him into writing any thing but what he really meant, but that often and often he made words bear a meaning in his verses, which was quite different from the sense they expressed in the writings of others." Thus dexterously does he contrive to inform us that Dante wrote in a conventional jargon!

In the first canto of the Inferno, Landino annotates: "It is evident, that by the greyhound he means him who

* Dante there speaks of the wolf, who is the same as the woman, and both represent Satan broken forth from the abyss, who was manifested, according to his belief, in the pope, the prince of this world.

is to *put an end to avarice;* and therefore it must signify *that prince* from whom such power will proceed; and hence he wrote: For I see, and therefore I declare it, that the messenger of God will slay the robber; meaning that a great commander from God will come and destroy the thief, viz. the pope." Landino knew, therefore, that the *woman* and the *wolf* were one and the same, but he said all that was needful by calling the wolf a figure of avarice, because among the learned, wolf and avarice were synonimous with pope.

His interpretation of the greyhound, derived from the annotators who lived nearer to Dante's own time, was formerly much ridiculed; but now that we know who was the Christ, destined to judge the living and the dead, we must confess that Landino was much better versed in the intricacies of this poetic labyrinth than those who affected to laugh at him. He declares it to be one with God's messenger, the heir of the eagle, and the destroyer of the woman. "Most of the commentators understand this to be Christ, when he shall come to judgment; and they say that the meaning is this: many are the beasts, that is to say, the men degraded to beasts, who are devoted to avarice; and they will continue to increase in number, until the final day of judgment, when Christ will come to judge the living and the dead; then will avarice be destroyed.* Man having, through his own ignorance and disobedience, which make him deny a superior, fallen into vice, Christ, to bring him back to his former dignity, will give him wisdom to oppose ignorance, love to conquer disobedience, and moral virtues to destroy vice; love, wisdom, and virtue, three principal means of attaining to the *blessing*. I am not at all opposed to the opinion of those learned men who say that Dante, being a great admirer of Virgil's doctrine,† in-

* On that day, everything will be put an end to, as well as avarice, therefore the allegorical sense is manifest in this passage.

† The doctrine by which Augustus was made a god.

tended, in this passage, to be very ambiguous and obscure, in imitation of that writer's words, *Jam redit et Virgo*, &c. which we well know, are so dark and doubtful, that by some they are thought to allude to *Christ's* coming, and by others to *Octavius*.* Readers may take which of the two interpretations they think most agreeable to the text; or should they hit upon a more suitable one, let them reflect, and perhaps by dint of skill they may be able to enlighten those who are still walking in darkness." (Landino).† Boccaccio wrote nearly the same thing on the verse which declares that the greyhound will be the saviour of Italy. "The author speaks of that part of Italy where Rome, swelling in her pride, threatens, from her apostolic seat, to give laws to the whole world. *He*, that is the greyhound, *will chase the she wolf from every city*, that is, he will destroy her from off the face of the world; *until he has driven her back again into the hell whence she first came, let loose by envy:* in this passage, we see that the author meant one thing, and said another; because it is very evident that wolves are not bred in hell." Further on, the commentator says that this wolf means the devil, and that "Some declare that this greyhound means *Christ*, and that his coming relates to the last judgment, when he will bring salvation to that humbled Italy of which we have before spoken (Rome); when that day shall come, both *heaven and earth* will be renewed." ("And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

* Of which Octavius Rome exclaimed to Fazio: "I would have worshipped him, had he suffered me, like as Christ is worshipped." All the ancient interpreters, though afraid to declare their knowledge of the true nature of this destroyer of the she-wolf, were evidently aware for whom the greyhound was meant. Boccaccio says, "He seems to mean something besides his literal words," &c. &c.

† This other, which would bring them nearer to the true meaning, would cause them to substitute the word *Emperor* for *Octavius*. See the note I.

And I John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Rev. ch. 21).

How unjustly were the ancient annotators criticised for their desire to put us into the right way! They were often content to appear childish themselves, in order to make us observant. Landino and Boccaccio both did every thing in their power to make their readers aware of the real meaning of the line Papè Satan, &c. "He begins to cry out and invoke the prince of demons, saying *Pape;* this word comes from *Papa;* and from this last is formed the name of the supreme pontiff, that is *Papa,*" (Bocc.) "The supreme pontiff, as something very wonderful among Christians, is called *Papæ;* and therefore we must say *Pape Satan,*" &c. (Landino.) "*Pape* superat ipsam *Thaidem,*" is the addition made by Vellutello. All these are apparently absurd derivations, but they are in reality most cunning indications. Why, for instance, was there any occasion to bring the pope's name in question at all, in order to show us that the Latin word *Pape* expresses wonder? Who did not know it before? It seems an idle truism, but it is not so, for the conventional language has rules which enjoin that the false sense shall be expressed openly, and the *true sense* darkly; so that it may be understood only by the children of wisdom. Let us not therefore be induced hastily to believe, that because a thing is without sense *outwardly*, it must be so *inwardly;* for no wise man ever plays the fool without having some object in view. Brutus was an idiot only while Tarquin was king of Rome. We might quote a long catalogue of these cunning hints, from the ancient commentators, but our purpose is to bring forward examples, and not to illustrate other illustrators. We must be satisfied, therefore, with having proved how well the fox could sometimes play the part of the ass.

As we have shown that the original interpreters of the poem had penetrated into its mysteries; so may the same

thing be proved of the first critics of the work, and of this we shall here offer one example.

Beatrice, as we know, includes in herself the double character of Christ and Cæsar, and we have elsewhere shown that by another of her adorers this idol of Dante was described in the letters *T H A 7 U*, which letters taken one by one, composed the name and title, &c. of the Emperor, Henry VII. who thus became Christ, the judge between the living and the dead. Pythagoras, the founder and head of the ancient secret school of Italy, taught his silent disciples that the human soul is a part of the supreme intelligence, which, when separated from the body, reunites itself to God, and becomes part of God, the doctrine from which arose the absurd theory of Pantheism.

Jacopo Mazzoni was one of those who, towards the middle of the 16th century, and at the instance of various learned men, undertook the task of writing a defence of the Divine Comedy, against those who boldly censured what they did not truly comprehend. He particularly laboured to exonerate it from the charge of puerility, which had been levelled against the well-known verse of the seventh canto of the Paradise:

"Di tutto me, pur per B e per ICE."

All understood and explained this to signify for *Bice*, or *Beatrice;* and, in this sense, the verse appeared so paltry, that the warmest admirers of Dante, nay, even Alfieri himself,* was vexed and dissatisfied with it. Mazzoni saw that the letters bore a meaning quite different from the received one; and that they concealed a mystic sense, known to him as well as to others of the secret school. Hence, in B. 3. ch. 60. of his Defence, he wrote as follows: "The above-mentioned verse is read incorrectly; it should be thus:

'Di tutto me, pur per B. e per I. C. E.'

* See Biagioli's comment on this line.

And he adds, that he cannot, and ought not, to explain what it means. "The discreet reader will pardon me, if I am *too obscure* in this passage: I cannot, I must not, speak out more plainly. I feel sure, however, that he did not write that verse *by chance*, as some have foolishly believed." He assures us, on the contrary, that Dante, in those four letters, expressed a *Pythagorean mystery*, and not a mere foolish play upon the word Bice, which would signify nothing. And, with other similar hints, half disclosed, he gives us to understand that he could not always tell what he knew; but that none condemned Dante, except those who did not comprehend him. He, to whom the Pythagorean secret had been communicated, was bound by an oath never to divulge it; and those who have discovered it, after a long investigation, might well excuse themselves under the plea of their horror at such profanation. If we interpret it, therefore, let it not be imagined that we abominate it the less in so doing. Mazzoni indicated clearly, when he separated the four letters B. I. C. E. by points, that, appropriated as they are to the mystic lady, they must be the initials of so many words, like the T. H. A. 7. U. If we turn to the passage in Dante, we shall see that he would fain have spoken; but that the appearance of his lady so overawed him, that he dared not speak, but bowed his head like one oppressed with sleep.

> "Ma quella riverenza che s' indonna
> Di tutto me pur per B. e per I. C. E.
> Mi richinava come l' uom che assonna."

That is, he bowed his head to B., Beatrice, and to Jesù Cristo Enrico. The first, or erotic figure, resolves itself into the second, or theological one (Jesus Christ); and both are resolved into the last, or political figure (E. Henry), the final object of the two preceding allegories.*

* From the 14th to the 16th century, words, such as Jerusalem, Jesus, Josaphat, &c., were written indiscriminately with a J or a G. Enrico, with or without the H, we noticed in a preceding chapter.

This is the Pythagorean secret which Dante's apologist dared not disclose. Are there, then, Pythagorean secrets in the Divine Comedy which some understand, and others do not; and which those who do understand, dare not reveal? Even so; and soon, by a change which takes place in the third heaven, we shall see this Beatrice—Jesus Christ—Henry, transformed into the *Light;* called, by Pythagoras, Philosophy, the daughter of the Emperor of the Universe. "I say, and affirm, that the lady, with whom I fell in love, after my first love, was that most beautiful and virtuous daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy." "By my lady, I mean always her of whom I have spoken in the preceding ode; that is, *Light;* the very virtuous Philosophy."* The manuscript, made use of by Dante's friend for his commentary, not only establishes the reading as given by Mazzoni, but gives another clue to the hidden secret. He writes and annotates thus: "But that reverence which he feels for B. I. C."—and he leaves out the E., into which the allegory resolves itself. His motive for omitting this last letter was probably to make us aware that it was an initial cipher by itself, and not the concluding letter of that absurd Bice, which has for so long deceived the world. It is clear, that Dante intended those four letters, which form the word Bice, to produce an equivoque; and so plain is it, that no one has ever thought of explaining the letters otherwise. This is the character which belongs to the double language: the outward or false meaning appears the real one; and the inward or true sense seems the distempered theory of a visionary. Every thing is equivocal in these writings. "The art which is all-powerful, is never to be seen." A large portion of Mazzoni's Defence is taken up in acquitting the poem of the charge of amphibology. He does not defend it, by saying that it is not equivocal; but he

* Convito, page 139 and 193. Ven. 1760. Ed. of Zatta.

proves that equivocation is not a fault; and he employs a store of erudition for the purpose, which lasts throughout forty-one chapters. But this proves that the poem was considered ambiguous, both by its traducers and its defenders. The third chapter of the Defence opens thus: "Equivocation exists whenever a word has two meanings, of which the one is *common*, and the other *secret*." He then proceeds to affirm, that, in the very title of the poem, this double meaning is included; and, after proving, by Suidas, Theophrastus, and Eustatius, &c., that Κωμῳδια signifies contumely, slander, abuse, blame, &c., he adds, that Dante chose the word Commedia in a satirical sense, making use of the equivoque prescribed by the language. How could he say otherwise, or explain the meaning of the word *Commedia*, without betraying the mystery of the poem? To say that Dante intended his work to be a satire, is to contradict his own assertion, that, whether he travelled among the blessed, or in Phlegethon, or in the infernal lakes, he always sang the rights of the monarchy. Certainly he never intended to satirize either his ideal and universal monarchy, or the King of kings, whom he fancied at its head. If there be a satire in the poem, it is directed against that Monarch's adversary; and, in that case, Mazzoni has told one-half of the truth only.

Let us now hear the opinions of a very high authority, viz., the author of the *Ragion Poetica:* "Poetry dresses the meaning in such a garb that it may correspond, to hidden causes, *with the inward spirit;* and, to outward appearances, *with exterior features.* This practice was derived from the ancient Egyptians, the first authors of fables. Their fabulous *persons* and *places* were nothing more than *characters*,* with which they instructed under *the imageries of a feigned story;* and hence we see, that

* Or characteristic signs, which lead to the hidden meaning; of which we have given many examples. They who cannot decipher the names of the places and persons, were called *gente grossa.* The secret sense was generally contained in the names.

the fables of the ancients are changed or varied, according to the thing taught, whether morality, philosophy, or theology. In the opinion of the learned, the gods were nothing but characters: and, to *those who understand* this may be a key with which they may enter within, and pass beyond the exterior, as a noble Pythagorean of antiquity has warned us.—In this way, the real world was painted over a false one, and reality was engraven on fable; round which, as about a source of profound doctrine, the lovers of wisdom wandered.—To these rites, which the Grecians derived from the Egyptians, succeeded the science and the doctrines which were transplanted from Egypt by Grecians who travelled thither, attracted by the widely-spread fame of the Egyptian priests.—Orpheus, Musæus, Homer — all went to Egypt, and learned wisdom from those priests; but they wrapped their knowledge in the same veil with which they found it covered.—The gods of Hesiod and Homer are lights of the same wisdom. They followed the example set them by Orpheus in his works.—Dante unfolded the wings of his intellect, and roused the forces of his mind to the grand design of describing the whole universe. He was inspired with the genius of Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod, Linus, and other ancient sages, who spread over the light of their doctrine the veil of poetry, and raised a mist which concealed from the eyes of the profane the sublimeness and splendour of their wisdom. So that poetry was a cloak flung over philosophy, which, to the vulgar eye, appeared masked; and this was done, because sometimes the soundest doctrines are perverted by the weak minded, and give rise to opinions pernicious to the republic, and to moral virtue. Therefore, he rightly determined that such gems should not be worn outwardly, but only given to those who could value them justly. I think it probable, that Empedocles might have been expelled from the sect to which he belonged, because he employed verses

only, and not poetry; or, in other word s,because he described the sciences in *metre* alone, without transforming them into poetical fables;—at least it would seem so, from the law which was made against him." These are the words of the learned master and protector of Metastasio, Gianvincenzo Gravina;* who, by his language, was clearly persuaded that Dante's poem is woven with the enigmatical doctrine of the Egyptians. But he was a prelate, and writing in Rome; and, therefore, he added these words: "From philosophy and poetry which were blended together sprang high and profound mysteries; but neither Dante, nor his contemporaries, possessed, *like them*, the art of skilfully employing the *enigmatic doctrine of the Egyptians;* from which he might have drawn colours and shades, which would have formed a body equally capable of delighting the senses of the vulgar, and of filling with sublime contemplation the minds of the wise." Now here is an obvious contradiction: for he has before said, that Dante was inspired with the genius of Orpheus, and the other sages, whom he names; all pupils of the school of Egypt; and, here, he declares that Dante could not have possessed, like them the knowledge of the use and value of the enigmatic doctrine of the Egyptians. Sure are we, that this writer, as well as many others not far remote from our own days, was imbued with the same knowledge, and from the same fount, whence Dante drew his. From its first entrance into Europe, this secret school has never ceased to count, among its pupils, the talents of every age; and an examination of its productions is all that is wanting to prove the fact.

Various writers of the last century were most assuredly in Dante's secret, and hinted at its nature ambiguously. We have elsewhere heard the opinion of the Canon Dionisi; and Gozzi, in his explanation of the Table of Cebes,

* Discourse on Fables.—*Endymion.*

and in his vehement defence of Dante, against the scurrilous charges of the Jesuit Bettinelli, gives a clear intimation of his own secret knowledge. — We cite a few of his words: "Dante writes of the evil and of the good which fall upon men *on this earth*, and not in the world above. The censor blames him, because neither his Hell, Purgatory, nor Paradise, are in reality what he calls them: True, they are not; but allegorically I say that the first treats of the condition of those who are stubborn in vice; the second, of those who are improving; the third, of the *just on earth*. O allegorically! this censor will cry; these are the miracles which the commentators find in Dante, these are the dreams of those who sing praises to his name! If that writer (Dante) has always declared that his works have two meanings, one literal, the other allegorical, why should it be called an invention or a dream, to interpret him according to his own desire? And if he ever did say it of any other work, he certainly affirmed it of his comedy." Then Gozzi quotes the words of Dante to Can Grande, adding: "The censor cannot deny me the privilege of interpreting the allegorical meaning of that poem, according to the poet's desire; and therefore I declare that those three places it describes, signify the state of souls *while yet in their bodies*. O how easily the truth would be discovered, were we to begin by examining the *year* when Dante feigned to commence his journey, the jubilee of that year, 1300, his desire to lead an active life in the republic; *the causes of his quitting Florence;* and especially were we to study the Vita Nuova, the Convito, and his other works, in which his soul is seen painted to the life in every passage, and where every thought of his heart is revealed. And I may here notice a fact which has escaped every one, viz. that he is more satirical in many places where he *says* nothing, than when he speaks at much length. This will be seen, by a reference, *among*

*others*, to the three verses in the 33d canto of the Purgatory: —

> " 'The heathen, Lord! are come!' responsive thus
> The trinal now, and now the virgin band
> Quaternion, their sweet psalmody began,
> Weeping."

" And here I pray thee, reader, if thou art desirous of discovering the truth, remark the circumstances in which Dante feigns to be placed at that time, and the persons who alternately sing that psalm, which he merely begins, and then take the 78th psalm, and read it throughout, and thou wilt marvel how he could so contrive, without speaking, to reprove the calamities of his time and their author. And if thou canst do the same thing in several other places,* thou wilt not blame him for having spoken in various languages, but thou wilt say, that from the beginning to the end, it is all art and poetical craft. All the characters of Theophrastes, and a great part of Dante's Comedy, are nothing but riddles, proposed by the folly of some men to others. Blessed is he who understands their true meaning!"† Now let us briefly consider that psalm which Dante commenced, and to which Gozzi calls our attention. We omitted taking any extended notice of it in a former chapter (19.) that we might examine it here.

After the woman of Babylon stole Beatrice's car (" re-

* In all those Latin verses, which relate to the solemn scene of Beatrice's judgment, as developed in ch. 19.

† These last passages are in the annot. to the Table of Cebes, where Gozzi cleverly cites one of the most sectarian tales ever composed. " Few persons remember *Sethos*, and how he goes to be educated by the Egyptian priests. I say few, for that excellent romance is now hardly known. It is too full of sense and *true doctrine* (sectarian) to suit the taste of the world." This is sufficient to prove Gozzi a pupil of the secret school; and those who understand the book he here cites, will acknowledge that this is not a hastily-formed judgment.

mark the circumstances in which Dante feigns to be placed, Gozzi,") the latter remained seated at the foot of the tree which produced the mystic fruit; when the four cardinal and the three theological virtues, who sadly surrounded her (" Note the persons who sing that psalm " G.) began to chaunt the 78th psalm. (" Examine into the causes of his departure from Florence." G.) We shall find, in that psalm confirmed to us, the nature of Beatrice, who was *left as a guard* at the foot of the mystic tree. (Purg. 32.) " O God, the heathens are come into thine inheritance, thy holy temple have they defiled, and made *Jerusalem* a heap of stones. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the land. Their blood have they shed like water on every side of *Jerusalem*," &c. &c.

After all these clear tokens given by Gozzi, can we believe that he was ignorant of the inward meaning of Dante's Comedy? If he knew it, why did he not reveal it? Because his lips are sealed by an oath, and because he dwelt in Italy.

Reghellini, another learned member of the secret society, asserts, justly, that Dante and Swedenburg professed the same doctrine as himself. In his before-cited work on " Masonry, considered as the result of the Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian religions," Ghent, 1829) he proves that Dante was acquainted with the mysteries of which he treats, and that his God was no other than the god of Swedenborg, *because both saw God under their own form.* In page 375, where he touches on the great mystery of the triple circle, he thus writes: " Dante, in his Paradise, sees the Eternal, whom he describes under the symbol of three circles. He beholds, in his vision, a transfiguration of these luminous circles, in his own form and likeness. The ancients had described the form of the Divinity under that of a man, long ere the swan of Italy sang. And so did the Egyptians, the Greeks, the

Romans, the Christians, &c.; and in recent times, Swedenborg, who fancied that he saw God under his own form."—"No painter would ever be able to draw a figure, if he did not first *make himself* exactly what the figure is to be." (Convito, 211.) So says Dante, who painted God and Christ, and Beatrice, whom he calls his Blessing; and who asserts elsewhere, that the Saviour is that Blessing. (p. 255.)

> "Così diceva, e de' suoi detti il vero
> Da chi l'udiva in altro senso è torto."—TASSO.

Reghellini, in speaking of the Abraxas, or symbolic stone, which figures both the sun and God, and in mentioning the Great Workman, synonimous with the Great Architect, the father of the gnostics, with his long hair and his beard, whose head is surrounded by four stars, which show the four qualities attributed to him, says that Dante, in one part of his poem, has described this god. "It was in Italy that these doctrines (those of his sect) were professed, before they reached other lands. Dante, to describe the Divinity, made use of the symbols of the Abraxas:—

> Low down his beard, and mix'd with hoary white
> Descended like his locks, which, parting fell
> Upon his breast in double-fold. The beams
> Of those four luminaries on his face
> So brightly shone, and with such radiance clear
> Deck'd it, that I beheld him as the sun." (Purg. 1.)

"These verses prove that Dante had seen the Abraxas; and the last, which says that he saw the *Divinity*, as though the sun had been before him, shows that he was initiated into the doctrines which we have explained of the sun, the emblem of the Divinity; a doctrine followed by the *Cabalistics and the Rose-Croix*, who had settled from remote times (as we shall prove) at Florence, Vicenza, and elsewhere." (p. 344.) Here we see another of

those proofs of conventional skill, which point out the nature of this god. That passage of Dante is relative to a man; Reghellini says, that it alludes to God; and it would be sheer folly to suppose, for a moment, that he did not know of whom those verses speak, when he copied them so exactly, from the first canto of the Purgatory. We say that Dante himself made of that freed man a figure of God, and that Beatrice is nothing but the *raiment* of that freed man; the raiment which, in the great day of judgment was *so clear;* just as *Laura* is a vesture woven with art, and flung over a *living man.* Toland declares that philosophers, to escape persecution, concealed their philosophic ideas under the veil of *divine* allegories, and that this mode of writing was in his time more than ever employed; now he asserted this in the past century, in which Swedenburg, among others, confirmed his words, with twenty-four Latin works, which exceed fifty volumes. Reghellini says the same thing of our own age, adding, that there are numberless works which have been thus written from century to century, down to our own days, which cannot by any means be comprehended without a knowledge of those mysteries. These are his words: "This history takes its origin from the Egyptian mysteries — from the different Christian philosophic sects, from the Crusaders, from the Knights Templars, and other innovators and protectors of the order. It is with these data alone that we can hope to pierce through the darkness of antiquity, and enter the labyrinth of works which have been written, from the earliest ages down to this day:" ch. 1. And we shall prove, by books written in these our own days, which are conformable, in every respect, with the fictions of Alighieri and others, that Reghellini has here asserted what is quite true.

Having thus briefly dwelt on the ages which have passed since Dante wrote, confirming our own opinions by the authority of his anonymous commentator, and Boccaccio in the fourteenth century; the evidence of

Landino, in the fifteenth; of Mazzoni, in the sixteenth; of Gravina, in the seventeeth; of Gozzi, in the eighteenth; and of Reghellini, in the nineteenth and present century, we now believe ourselves fully entitled to conclude, that many expositors and critics of the poem, ancient as well as modern, were aware of those secrets of our great bard, which we have undertaken to bring to light, and that they were equally acquainted with the real nature of the enigmatic B I C E of the Ghibelline oracle.*

* See the note (I) at the end of the volume.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### WAS THE SECTARIAN LANGUAGE KNOWN TO THE PAPAL COURT AND THE INQUISITION?

It cannot be supposed that the existence of this secret jargon was unknown to the Pope or to his holy office. There were too many faithless brethren who had left the sect, moved either by malice or interest, remorse or terror; too many unhappy ones from whom tortures had wrung a confession; and too many whose love of life induced them to snatch at the alternative of apostacy; all or any of these could have told much, too much to her who was seated over the waters, or to her ministers and servants. How then has it happened that, from this party, the truth has never come to us? The answer becomes a question. If we knew that thousands of works were in circulation which yet we could not destroy, and which were couched in such a form that, while containing the most bitter satires on us, they seemed written in our praise; supposing that we got possession of a key whereby we could open those writings and show forth all their hidden meanings; should we put that key into the hands of the world? Should we declare that we were accused of the greatest iniquities, and run the risk of losing the reputation on which our greatness was founded? Should we desire all men to know that the first authors of the age, nay, of many consecutive ages,

celebrated for character and learning, generally read and admired, and, therefore, having it in their power either to give or deprive us of reputation, were our bitter enemies, despising and detesting us? — We think not. But, if we could prevent that key from falling into the hands of others, should we not do so?—Most certainly. And Rome had more facilities than is imagined for arresting the circulation of such works. Who, then, was likely to make this language publicly known? Not the faithful sectarians, for silence was their salvation. Not Rome the insulted, for it was her interest to be dumb. Not the apostates, for having sold themselves to the Pope, they never dared to breathe one syllable when his watchword was Silence!

We must not judge of the former power of Rome by her present insignificance. With the hundred eyes of Argus, with the hundred hands of Briareus, she saw every thing, she touched every thing; no corner of the earth was secure from her watchful glare; no distance ensured safety from her grasp. Even monarchs trembled and obeyed her. The Inquisition examined and condemned with closed doors; and, if any member attempted to break the rigid silence which was imposed on all and generally kept inviolate, he was immediately disgraced and turned out. Hence we see that this language of insult was known only to two classes, viz. the insulters and the insulted; and if the same desire for concealment influenced both, who was to speak? and supposing that any one individual had committed an explanation to paper, intending it to appear as an anonymous or a posthumous work, we doubt whether it would have ever come safe down to our time, escaping the vigilance of the two adverse parties. It is very certain that its discovery would have been the signal for its destruction; the sectarian oath and the prudence of fear rendering both parties equally solicitous to root out every trace of its subterraneous march. True, we have

not only a great number of explanations both of the language and of the mysteries, but we have the history of the sect itself, and of the most distinguished sectarians; but all are composed in the conventional jargon. This jargon is interpreted by those who used it, with the same conventional language; and, by their explanations, we are enabled to connect works with each other which outwardly have no sort of relationship; this is all that we profess to do, and, if we are required to show an authentic book, which explains all the mysteries, the design, means and language of the sect in clear and precise terms, we answer that such a book does not and cannot exist; that the writing of a work of that nature was forbidden under the most dreadful penalties; and that the brethren were bound by an oath to seize and burn it, were it ever published; we can prove that vigilant spies were constantly employed by their enemies to watch their proceedings; that there were always timorous minds ready to fall into their snares; no inch of ground where a pen could move in freedom; and no press to multiply the copies of a work, when the original was lost without a chance of recovery. Dr. M'Crie's recently published History of the Reformation in Italy, proves, by a long series of documents and facts, that Lutheranism, when first declared, made an incredible progress in that country; that numbers of the most exemplary of her citizens embraced the new religion; that its branches stretched out into many of her provinces; that evangelical churches were built, where proselytes of every age, sex and rank, flocked to worship; and in short, that in most cities the Reformed faith was received, either partially or wholly. Before this work saw the light, who, even among the most erudite in Italian history, was aware of the existence of these indubitable facts? The learned author explains very clearly how they have remained so long buried in silence. He takes into consideration the efforts made by the all-powerful court of

Rome to stifle them on their way to posterity; and he confesses, that his discoveries, the fruits of most arduous research, are as nothing compared with what still lies unrevealed. Now, if Rome could succeed in keeping from the world the knowledge of events so public and extraordinary, at a time too when her power was failing; and when the persecuted had but to crave an asylum in any of the states which had boldly embraced the Reformed worship, with the opportunity which the growing enlightenment of the age afforded them, of printing and publishing their works; what difficulty would she have found in crushing all attempts at publicity, where the facts were neither public nor extraordinary; but, secret and guarded, and when the papal power was all but boundless; in days far remote from the present, when the oppressed had no chance of escape, no asylum where they could hope to elude the piercing eye and stretched-out arm of their enemy; when ignorance and credulity were prevalent, and printing not yet invented? As we have already shown, the sect and the papal court went hand in hand in their desire to prevent publicity, and the two united were more than sufficient to ensure the accomplishment of their wishes.

Shall we wonder at these things, when even in these our own days, we see that the secret societies guard their mysteries with as jealous care as when the lives of their members were in danger; and that Rome evinces almost as much anxiety to destroy or suppress the books which offend her, as in the days when countless talent threatened her existence? Her prudence was indeed most admirable! Insults were dissembled, that no busy tongue might hint they were received! The weapons of her foes were disregarded, in the hope that the rust of time would blunt and render them pointless! Far different was the conduct of some of her servants. While the ashes of Dante were yet warm, the Cardinal del Borghetto arrived in Ravenna, and, in the impotence of rage, he

would have insulted the last remains of our poet, as the remains of Palingenius were afterwards outraged. Had he succeeded in his design, the flame which consumed the body would have shown the secret of the poem. But luckily his fury was restrained in time; and the book of the Monarchia, wherein no outward symptoms of heresy can, by the most scrutinizing reader, be traced, was accused as the guilty object of his wrath.* Again, the Inquisitor Fra Marco Piceno proposed to condemn all the poets of the age as heretics; he went so far as to imprison several of them, and put them to the torture; and already had he begun to extract from the wretched sufferers a confession most dreaded by Rome, when, on the first tidings she obtained of what was passing, the prisoners were ordered to be instantly released, and the friar was dismissed from the holy office; the only satisfaction he could obtain being ridicule and censure, for having fancied heresies where none existed, and ignorantly persecuted learning. Thus was danger warded off for a period.†

Writers without number have been for five centuries, trying to prove that Dante's words mean precisely the reverse of what they do mean; darkening the clearest passages, and casting an impenetrable veil over the most doubtful; some will have it that he whom Alighieri placed in the courts of hell, is not the Pope, but the Esau of the Bible; while others declare him to represent a certain Florentine of the house of the Cerchi. If we may believe some of these expositors, the dragon Satan, who rises from the pit, and transforms Beatrice's car into the beast of the Revelations, is not Satan, but Mahomet; while others assert

* "He caused the book to be publicly burnt, as containing heretical matters, and he would have done the same thing with the bones of the author." (Bocc. Life of Dante.)

† "Had not a stop been put to it, the scandal would have been very great. Fra Marco was expelled from the holy office for his ignorance of proper discipline." (Girolamo Squarzafico, Life of Petrarch.)

that the Pope did certainly rob a lady of Florence of the church. Here the Cardinal Bellarmine heaped page upon page to convince the world that Dante was a loving son of the Romish church, and to confute the protestants who claimed him as their own. There a reverend Augustine composed several dissertations with a view to prove that he was a wonderful theologian, and fully entitled to be a holy father of the Latin church;* while a pious Jesuit reprinted the poem with comments, and dedicated it to a pope. This last, in order to show proofs of Dante's orthodoxy, added his Credo and his Penitential Psalms to the poem, with a certain Magnificat which he never wrote, and a conjecture of his own, that Dante, in penitence for his sins, translated the entire Psaltery; together with these, we find the notice of a precious manuscript with this title: "Here begins a Treatise on the Catholic Faith, composed by that renowned and excellent doctor, Dante Alighieri, the Florentine poet; it contains his reply to the Inquisitor of Florence when asked concerning what he believed;" and besides this "some verses written by Dante Alighieri, on being accused of heresy.† So far was this farce carried, that his poem, henceforth always called the divine, was expounded in the catholic churches, as the Bible is expounded to us; the first lecturer who occupied the chair being Boccaccio, who understood every syllable of its real meaning. Clothed in the habit of a priest, he took the seat to which he had been invited by the Republic; and, in the church of St. Stephen in Florence, entered on the task of interpreting Dante according to their wishes. This example was followed in several other cities, and, as if by magic, Dante was suddenly transformed into the vigorous champion of the Vatican. Nor

* On the theological doctrine contained in the Div. Com. Dissertation of P. Gianlorenzo Berti.

† It seems that Dante was persecuted by the Inquisition. (See Filelfo's life of the poet, p. 118.)

were there wanting some who, finding it impossible to wrest meanings, boldly denied facts; like that Fontanini who, with the greatest assurance, asserted that Petrarch never wrote those three famous sonnets against Rome, — an assertion which refutes itself, and needed not the powerful reasons with which Zeno and Volpi showed its absurdity. So important was it to make the world believe that such men as Dante and Petrarch were wedded to the doctrines of the holy catholic, apostolic church of Rome! And so has it always been with respect to all persons of celebrity and talent; for the Romish court is sensible that the supposed adherence of the learned reflects honour and credit on herself. How then was it possible to place in the open hand of the world the mystic key which would have unlocked such fearful enmity?

These were the arts practised, after those who might have declared (in secret, at least,) that they were false, had descended into the grave. But a very different course was pursued during their lives, while Italy, France, Spain, England and Germany, swarmed with sectarians, and while countless volumes were written in the mystic jargon, and in secret and concealment read and interpreted. Then, the very same poems which were afterwards studied and commented by reverend churchmen, and dedicated to popes and cardinals, were under the anathema of their predecessors, who knowing their nature, dreaded their effects. Before Rome obtained possession of the weapons of her adversaries, she was undoubtedly in a position of extreme difficulty; feeling the impolicy of declaring those works heretical, which were in the hands of persons of every age and class, and yet knowing that they were a slow poison, acting on the minds of their readers with subtle and sure effect. In this strait, she first tried the policy of throwing discredit both on the books and their authors, describing the first as odious vehicles for abominations, and the last as the

hateful inventors of them. The pulpits resounded with the voices of priests and friars, who denounced the poets as impious sorcerers, and their verses as springs of corruption, lures to perdition, and plague-spots on the souls of those who looked upon them. Petrarch himself, the chaste bard of love, was accused of sorcery by the Pope in person;* the same crime was laid to the charge of all the poets of the age,† and their verses, without exception, were declared the work of infernal spirits. Laura's bard, thanks to the many friends who shielded him from the wrath of the inquisition, escaped uninjured, although with great difficulty. "Petrarch cleared himself with great difficulty," writes Squarzafico, in his life of the poet. We shall not here enter into an examination of the charges brought against these writers, but shall content ourselves with extracting some passages from Boccaccio, as specimens of the accusations made, and of the character of the accusers.

"They have entered into a conspiracy against the fine arts, and desire above every thing to be looked upon as men of exemplary lives; they leave their faces unshorn to show their watchfulness; they walk with their eyes bent on the ground to appear in meditation; and with solemn steps, that the ignorant may see their abstraction, and suppose them bending under the weight of thought; their garb is sober, not because their minds are regulated to propriety, but because an appearance of sanctity deceives; their words fall rarely and softly, and they give no answer when spoken to, until their eyes have been cast

* "The supreme pontiff used to call me a necromancer"—"He called me a magician." Petr. de Reb. Sen. ep. 1.

† "At that time the name of a poet was so odious, that those who followed that profession were called magicians, sorcerers and heretics. A certain Marco Piceno was appointed the inquisitor to try heretical delinquencies; he was of the order of preachers, and ignorant of every kind of literature and science; and he had the audacity to arrest some of those learned men." Squarzafico, Life of Petrarch.

up to heaven, and their lips have breathed forth a sigh. All this is done that the bystanders may suppose that they hold communion with spirits above. All their professions are of sanctity, piety and justice; and they go about repeating, The zeal of the Lord consumes me. While pretending all this, they scruple not to put their sickle into their neighbour's corn. Speak to them of poetry and poets, and at the mention of either word, they are ready to burst with fury, while fire sparkles in their eyes; in schools, in public places, and in pulpits, they howl their invectives against them, as against the most deadly enemies, and the idle populace who listen to their imprecations, begin to tremble, not for the innocent, but for themselves. According to them, poetry is a vain and empty thing; poets are tellers of lies and fables; and their works are a tissue of falsehoods and immoralities. They call them seducers of the mind, and guides to sin, and pretend that the mere act of reading or touching them is an offence against God, and that the writers should be without distinction, condemned on Plato's authority, to be banished from our houses and our cities. But why repeat all that hatred, excited by envy, makes them say?—The poison of such tongues has no power to sully the name of the illustrious, but the heart sickens to hear such beings, sunk as they are, dare to impeach the innocent. Granting that poems are fables—if they be read with understanding minds, the deep mystery hidden under their fabulous covering will soon be discovered; for the fable itself has been defined: a demonstrative way of speaking in fictions, the real meaning of which fictions is made manifest by stripping off the outward covering. Fables are pleasing as well as profitable, for the unlearned delight in their outward sense, while the learned search for the inward and real one. Let these malignant scoffers cease then to vent their ignorant malice against poets.—They say that poems are often obscurely written, in order to make us believe that more skill is required to render

them intricate;* but they ought to know that the clearest things sometimes seem dark, owing to the stupidity of the looker-on; as a one-eyed man gazes at a brilliant sun, and fancies it cloudy. There are certain things whose nature is so profound, that it cannot be penetrated without difficulty, even by the brightest intellects; and others which are naturally clear, but covered with so *artful fictions*, that their true sense can hardly be ascertained.—Let it not be supposed then, that poets hide the truth under a *fiction*, from envy, or from any intention of concealing it from the reader, or from a desire to show their own skill; far from it, their reason is this: they know that things are held dear, in proportion as they cost trouble in discovering.†—With respect to the charge of falsehood, it is untenable; poets feign, but they do not deceive, and I would ask, what did St. John write in his Revelations? Things which are clothed in the majesty of words, but which, at first sight, appear to be quite at variance with the truth. I shall be told that those are figures, and not fictions. But what a miserable subterfuge! I know that they are figures, but I ask, if their *literal* sense contains the truth? No, but falsehood is never imputed to the prophets, neither should poets be charged with it, who with all their best endeavours, walk in their holy footsteps.—These slanderers give another reason why the verses of poets should be consigned to destruction; they accuse them of describing *one God under several forms*. But they know not what they say. Does not the sacred volume call our church a car, a ship, an ark, a house, a temple, &c. and the same with regard to the enemy of mankind. These names are mystic; and mystic are the words of poets. Why then do these foolish ones exclaim so loudly? They are miserable at the idea

* This was the reason given by the priests and friars, to prevent the world from inquiring into the true one.

† They did it to avoid danger, as Boccaccio well knew, in spite of the artful reasons he alledges here.

that there is something beyond their comprehension.*— They call poets enticers to sin; this reminds me of a man, remarkable for sanctity and strictness of doctrine, who had conceived such a hatred to poetry, that he could not utter the word without disgust. One morning, he was reading the Gospel of St. John in our general study, before several persons, when happening to fall upon something relating to poetry, he broke into a violent rage, and with a face inflamed with passion, he began to abuse all poets,† and declared with an oath, that he never had read, and never intended to read any of their productions. Could any fool have condemned himself more fully?—The base accusers say also that poets seduce the mind, and that their soft words, and elegant, florid language sink into the hearts of their readers, and guide them into forbidden paths. Again, they call poets, apes to philosophers. If they understood their verses, they would see that they are not apes, but true philosophers, nothing else than philosophy being concealed under the veil of rhyme. The philosopher, in syllogisms, reproves what he considers false, and praises what he believes to be true; and the poet, putting aside the syllogisms, conceals with all his art, under the veil of fiction, the truth his imagination has conceived.‡ Better would it be for them, if instead of talking so much, they would strive to become the apes of Christ, and leave off ridiculing what

* This charge and defence, respecting the practice of shadowing the same object, under different aspects and figures, is a valuable hint towards an interpretation of the Divine Comedy and other similar works, and no less correct than valuable.

† Remark that this declaration against poets was made in reference to St. John's Gospel.

‡ These few words offer an exact idea of the Monarchia in connexion with the Comedia of Dante. The first with dialetic syllogisms, and the last with poetical fictions, say precisely the same thing; that is, reprove what they consider false, and praise what they believe true. Boccaccio here confirms Dante's own assertion.

they do not comprehend; as it often happens that those who try to scratch others, feel their own flesh torn. These arbiters of justice cease not to cry: O celebrated men, redeemed with the divine blood, people beloved of God, if piety and devotion, if love for Christ's religion, and the fear of God, be not all dead within you, cast these impious works into the flames; burn them and give them to the winds; for it is a deadly sin to have them in your houses, or to read or look on them; they are poison to the soul; they will drag you down to hell, and exile you for ever from the regions of the blessed. Would not any one on hearing these things believe, that poets are the enemies of God's name, in league with devils and cruel workers of iniquity? Thus these ignorant men have it in their power to destroy the reputation of the most celebrated among us. The artist is allowed, even in the holy temples, to paint the three-headed animal who guards Pluto's dwelling, and the pilot Charon who ploughs the river Acheron, and the furies armed with snakes and brands, and even Pluto himself, the prince of the infernal kingdom, the tormentor of the condemned; but if the poet presume to write the same things, he sins, and those who read his descriptions sin also!* I entreat these sages who foretell the doom of poets, to tell me in what respect the sin of poetry exceeds the crime of philosophy. The last searches for truth, and the first having found it, preserves it under a veil. Men, if ye be wise and prudent, you will calm your angry passions. We have fought together in hatred long enough. Study the works of poets and ye will become better men, for under their fictions are enclosed the sacred doctrines of the Christian faith, that the same thing may be seen under

* This alludes to the cry of the clergy against those who read the poem of Dante, and the description of the infernal valley in Boccaccio's bucolick, &c.

*different forms.** Our Dante has admirably described the three conditions of man after death, according to sacred theology;† and our living Petrarch has, under the veil of pastoral eloquence, in his bucolick, celebrated the praises of the true God and the Holy Trinity.‡ There stand their works, and those who desire to comprehend them, may soon discover their meaning.§ Dante, though harassed by a long exile, never abandoned his *physical* and *theological* doctrines; this is shown in the Commedia, that admirable work in which he *appears* to be not mystical, but a divine and Catholic theologian. In the sixth book of the heavenly Jerusalem, Augustine cites the opinion of Varro; this writer recognised three kinds of theology: viz. mystic, physical and civil. The first is fabulous; the second is natural and moral, and seems made to be useful to the world; the third is civil or political, and belongs to cities. Of these three, the physical is more studied by poets, because under their fictions they hide natural and moral things, celebrate the deeds of illustrious men, and sometimes, also, those which *appear* the deeds of their gods; this is particularly the case, when they

* Why take so much pains to conceal things, which were so holy that had they been expressed openly they would have deserved not punishment, but admiration and respect? The poison was hidden in the *different meanings*.

† Dante has declared this to be the *literal* sense of the poem, but not the *allegorical* sense. Boccaccio will explain hereafter what he means by theology.

‡ Those who understand that pastoral, will not agree to this conclusion, according to our ideas of Christian doctrines.

§ Many did peruse them with avidity, to find out their meaning, while those who sought celebrity took up the same style of writing, and were praised and patronised by the literary chiefs of the party. "We see our Dante Alighieri, (writes Boccaccio in a letter to Jacopo Pizinge,) a celebrated man, and acquainted with the secret haunts of the muses, climb the steep mount by a new way, totally unknown to the ancients. His are no coarse or vulgar rhymes, as some assert, but by a cunning device of his own, he writes so that the inward meaning is deeper than the outward covering."

compose their sacred verses in praise of the gods and their grand deeds, as we have already said; hence, they have been called theologians. Dante may be called a sacred theologian, and this class, as occasion requires, become *physical theologians.*" (Part of the 14th and 15th chapters of the Geneal. of the Gods.)

Thus has Boccaccio, with a mass of concerted words, informed us that Dante's poem is of a two-fold nature, by declaring him a sacred or physical theologian, according as he was literal or allegorical, because he sang at the same time, the rights of religion and of the monarchy; opposing to him who feeds on the betrayers of Christ and Cæsar, a mysterious figure who unites in itself the double characters of Christ and Cæsar; thus, from a sacred, becoming from necessity a physical theologian, who under his fictions conceals natural and moral things, and the deeds of illustrious men—and in his life of Dante, Boccaccio repeats a great part of what we have here cited, both as to the nature of poetical allegories, and the folly of those who derided them; the deep meanings they enclose, and the double effect they produce on the ignorant and on the wise: "What shall we say then of poets? Shall we call them fools like those who speak and judge of what they know not? Surely not; for in the fruit of their works there lies hidden a profound meaning; and their bark and leaves display a flowery and majestic eloquence; I say that theology and poetry scarcely differ from one another, when the subject is the same; indeed I consider that theology may be called the poetry of God; for what is it but a poetical fiction in the scriptures, when Christ is described as a lion, and a lamb, and a worm, and a dragon, and a stone? And what are the words of our Saviour in the gospel, but a discourse foreign from the sense? which language we in common parlance, call an allegory. Hence it is very clear that poetry is theology, and theology poetry." Going back to the origin of pagan theology, he proves that it is nothing but poetry, and asserts

that the first kings surrounded themselves with pomp and splendour, in order to gain the respect of their people; and also caused themselves to be worshipped as divinities, so that the ignorant multitude believed that they were really not men, but Gods. "This could not be done without the assistance of poets, who, therefore, to extend their own fame, and please at once the prince and his subjects, by the use of various and skilful fictions, made those appear their real sentiments, which in point of fact were directly contrary to them; using to those men whom they feigned to be of divine origin, the same language which they would have employed to the only true God. From this custom, the deeds of mighty men came to be considered as the actions of Gods, and such was, and still is the practice of every poet." This is in the life of Dante, and it is descriptive of his practices; and, in the commentary on the poem, the same writer says: "Poets were considered not only theologians, but celebrators of the works of valiant men,—their verses were composed to eternise their fame. Those who open, not with envy, but with impartial discretion, the bucolic of my excellent master Francis Petrarch, will find under its outward covering, sweet and delightful instruction, and so also in the poem of Dante, as I trust to make it appear. Then it will be seen that poets are not liars, as the envious and ignorant wish them to be considered." (Com. on the first Canto.)

To speak boldly, the fault of our poets, and particularly of Dante, may be reduced to this: As the Gentiles, under the mysteries of their religion, sometimes concealed the actions of their princes; so they, under the mysteries of the prevailing religion expressed their political ideas; thereby avoiding danger, gaining good-will, and extending the numbers of their party; working cautiously under the eye of their enemies, who never discovered the deception. We should make use of mythology in such a case, without scruple; and they, under the force of cir-

cumstances, employed the doctrines of catholicism. To draw the character of a supreme prince, the ruler of the high and low in society, we should borrow the Jupiter of the heathen; and they, instead of this Jupiter, substituted the true God, and carried on their audacious allegory by giving a meaning to every symbol, mystery, and doctrine of the Romish faith. We are told every day by kings, that they are the image of the God whom we revere; and Dante, taking advantage of the similitude, pushed it into an illusion which is almost invincible; hence, those who see only the outward sense of his poem, hold him up as a mirror of piety and catholicism, while those who enter its labyrinth discover that its mazes are all political. This is the whole secret. Boccaccio has explained the mystery with an abundance of words in prose, and with three lines of verse he does the same; introducing Dante into one of his sonnets as Minerva, to say, that his poem may be read and explained in two ways, according as the world is spiritual or temporal. "I am Dante Alighieri, the obscure Minerva—and I made my noble volume worthy either of a *spiritual* or *temporal* reading."* Boccaccio was as bold as skilful, or he never would have dared thus to face the hosts of his enemies! While pretending to defend the poetry of his time, which those enemies maligned, because they dreaded its power, he was guiding us to the mysteries within it; and he wrote his work on the genealogy of the Gods in Latin, that every one versed in the mystic jargon, no matter in what country he dwelt, might understand the truths he was revealing. But even he, skilled as he was in attacking his enemies and defending his friends, was not proof against superior cunning, which finally obtained the mastery over him. This is a fact worthy to be remembered by all.

* Dante describes Beatrice (into whom he changed himself) as crowned with *the olive of Minerva;* therefore he here calls himself *the obscure Minerva;* and this is the same Minerva who served as a guide to Frezzi in his Quadriregio.

Boccaccio, already somewhat advanced in years, was residing in Florence, when, one day, a Carthusian friar came to his house, and desired to speak with him, upon an affair of importance. He announced himself as a messenger sent by Petronius, one of the same order, who was recently dead, and demanded a private interview. When he was admitted, he addressed Boccaccio in a saintly tone, saying: "The holy man who sent me, now a saint in heaven, never saw thy face; but, by divine grace, he was permitted to see thy heart, and to know thy grand secret." Now, this grand secret, certainly, could not mean the freedom of Boccaccio's writings; for no inspiration was required to fathom such a mystery as that. The friar then proceeded to reprove him for the ill-use he had made of his rare talents; and urged him to reform his way of life, and give up his profane writing; assuring him, that the blessed father, shortly before he expired, had prophecied that, if he did not forsake his present course, death and endless punishment, would speedily come upon him. He wound up his mission by saying, that the inspired deceased had revealed to him that he had seen Christ in person, and had read upon his forehead every earthly event, past, present, and future; and, to prove his assertion, he told Boccaccio the secret which he believed unknown to all the world. When he took his leave, he informed him that he was about proceeding to execute other similar apostolic missions, in Naples, France, England, &c.; and that he should afterwards visit Petrarch, and warn him also of approaching death, in case of unrepentance.* We want no superhuman revelation to make us understand what was this grand secret, and what were the commissions which required a journey to Naples, France, England, and Petrarch. But, if we wish for further assurance on the point, it will be sufficient to reflect, that it was not the dissolute writings of Boccaccio

* See Ginguené; Hist. Litt. d'Italie, art. Boccacc.; Manni's Hist. of the Decameron, Life of Bocc.; Baldelli's Life of Bocc.; &c. &c.

which drew down on his head this fearful threat; because the same doom was foretold to Petrarch, whose pages were never stained by licentiousness. Boccaccio felt that he was discovered, and trembled. He immediately wrote to Petrarch, relating the fact; declaring his determination to alter his mode of life, and urging his friend to follow his example. He was even on the point of burning all his works, and did actually destroy some of them; and so deep was the impression left on his mind by the friar's emphatic words, and by the idea that his secret was penetrated, that he forthwith renounced the world, and turned priest.*

There are some events in history, whether literary, political, or ecclesiastical, which, at first sight, appear to us quite enigmatical; but, when once aware of the existence of the masked language of the secret antipapal sects, (especially of the society of the Templars, and the Patarini, or Albigenses, or Cathari, with whom the learned in Italy were then so strictly connected,) we find them very intelligible and clear. The following is an example, which we cite, because it is confirmatory of our opinion that the court of Rome and the Inquisition were aware of the secrets we are now revealing. There are still extant many works written in those days, which seem dictated by a

* Petrarch, in his answer, treated this mission as a priestly imposture, and endeavoured to tranquillise the alarmed Boccaccio. "It is an old and common practice, to throw the veil of religion and sanctity (with fictitious lies,) over wickedness; and thus, with the pretext of the Divinity, to cover human guile. This is my opinion of the present case. When that messenger from the dead comes here to me, (who visited you first, probably because you were nearer to him, and told you of his intention to go first to Naples, and then to France and England,) and relates the tale of his mission, as he did to you; then I shall see how far he is worthy of belief. I shall narrowly observe the age of the man, his face, his eyes, his manners, his habits, his movements, his language, his voice, and his slightest word; and, especially, I shall mark the conclusion of his discourse, and investigate his meaning in entering upon it," &c. &c.—(Rer. Sen. B. 1. Ep. 4.) We cannot tell whether the monk ever had the courage to pay his promised visit to the wary Petrarch.

sincere and Catholic spirit; but which, in spite of appearances, were condemned by the Holy Office as heretical, and as such publicly given to the flames, and sometimes their authors with them. Those who read the poem of Cecco d'Ascoli, the friend of Dante, and abide by the outward meaning, will pronounce, with many critics, (Ginguené among the number,) that it is a bad poem on physics and natural history; and yet the Inquisitors discovered that that *Acerba* contained many bitter heresies, and therefore burnt both writer and poem. Cecco did write on physics and natural history; but he thought it necessary, even on these subjects, to recommend silence and concealment. For instance: "I know that you will understand me without any comment.—I need not say more;—I cannot explain here what I mean;—I am silent, in order to *serve the ladies;* therefore, let it not grieve you, if here I am mysterious.—If you *understand* me, you will discover the true meaning of many of my words.—Silence is sometimes useful, when it is not convenient to speak.—No *lady* ever was gifted with perfect virtue, except her who was created before the world.—Rarely, as Dante says, are things comprehended which are hidden under a veil."

But the imprudent Cecco raised the veil, which covered these dark words and double meanings, before his disciples at Bologna, and again in Florence; and the consequence was, that, in the year 1327, on the 26th day of September, he was burnt at Florence by the Inquisitors of the Patarini.—(See Gio. Villani. B. 10. ch. 39.) The historian says, that he was accused, among other crimes, of having foretold that Antichrist was coming in power and rich vestures. And Lami publishes his sentence: "Brother Accurtius.....pronounced him a heretic.....as well as the book which he wrote, in the Latin tongue, on astrology; and he condemned another of his works, written in Italian, and called *Acerba*; ordering it to be

burnt, and excommunicating all who might have in their possession any work of a similar nature."

Cecco's tongue was even more imprudent than his pen. He was first admonished by the Inquisitor of Bologna, Fra Lamberto de Cingulo, in the month of November, 1324; and was ordered to make a general confession, to say so many paternosters and avemarias, and to fast, &c. for the offence of slandering the Catholic faith; being strictly prohibited, at the same time, from teaching either in public or private. After this sentence, Cecco went to Florence; and there he was seized and burnt, not quite three years after his first condemnation: a pretty strong proof that he had not spared the Catholic faith in the interim. And yet, for all this, his poem appears the work of a faithful Catholic, and finishes with the praises of the Trinity.

"Father Appiani," writes Tiraboschi, "has taken great pains to justify this unhappy astrologer; and, by different passages of his works, has shown that he wrote as a wise and Christian philosopher." So thought many others. Ginguené says: "It is difficult to find in his poem those proofs of heresy which condemned him to the flames." Hence he declares the sentence of the Inquisition, "not more absurd than barbarous."* How could these critics discover the heresies, when the poem was written in the Platonic jargon, which they did not understand?

The unfortunate Cecco was on terms of friendship with all the sectarian lovers of the age. Cino begged him, in the name of his lady, *the guide of his mind*, to seek among the stars for the fate in store for him (see Son. 85.); and declared, that he had often thought of putting himself to *death*, but had been withheld by *Love;* who, in the midst of his despair, had shown him that his friend was in a similar plight in his Court.—(Son. 86.)

Petrarch also held him in great esteem, as we find by the sonnet which he addressed to him: "Thou art the

* Biographie Universelle, *art.* Cecco d'Ascoli, Paris. 1813.

great Ascolan, who enlightenest the world." And Dante was his friend and correspondent, as he boasts in his Acerba. He there speaks in high terms of the ornamented style and sweet rhymes of the Florentine bard; but taxes him with being a timid Frog (but that Frog died in his bed, and not at the stake,) because he did not declare openly the origin of love. He tells us that Dante wrote to him to settle a doubt respecting twins; of whom one was born with good, and the other with evil propensities, and that he answered him that the first was born under the influence of the east, where the light first appears, and the other under that of the west, where it disappears. And he is never so obscure as when he speaks of this light; he treats of it under so many different meanings that he finally concludes, and justly enough; "I know that these words will puzzle you, but *be mindful of them*, and you will soon know what I mean by *light*. I say that *light* may be understood in two ways, and you must hear and comprehend *more than I can say*." Of the allegorical lady, he writes: "From her proceeds that *light* which kindles the soul with love; destroys *death*, and leads to *life;* so does she act upon the hearts of those who feel her divine brightness. But it is better for me to be silent on this subject, seeing that I am but of poor intellect."

Boccaccio makes Venus speak out more openly in his Ameto: "I am the only and triple *light* of heaven, the beginning and end of all created things, the divine *light*, which in three persons and one substance, governs heaven and the world."

Dante has said that Beatrice, the number nine, three times three, (the Holy and much profaned Trinity), was dead when he wrote his letter to the princes of the earth; and Cecco, who pretends to be much wiser on these subjects than Dante, says, that—"I have been with Love;* I say what I mean in philosophical terms, and I

* When we ascend with love into the third heaven, we shall see him with an arrow in his hand, and a heart engraven with Christ's image;

hope that Dante may be able to solve them.* In the third heaven, I was transformed into this lady, and so blessed were my feelings that I scarce knew what I was. My understanding took her form, her eyes showing me salvation; therefore *I am she;* and if she ever leaves me, the shadows of *death* will encompass me," &c &c. Now we engage to show hereafter, that Dante did transform himself into Beatrice in the third heaven; that he exclaimed *I am she;* that he confessed that he (transformed into Beatrice), was like a mirror bearing on its surface the image of the great allegorical lady, and, finally, that this image, by him confused with God, was nothing more holy than the Emperor Henry. Then we shall understand why after saying that Love spoke to him, and that Beatrice resembled Love, and had the name of Love, he adds: "Love is not a substance in itself, but an accidental substance;" that is, a modification of his affections and thoughts, (Vita Nuova. p. 42,) and therefore Beatrice, who has the name of Love, is his own manner of feeling and thinking; Dante, in short, who speaks of his own self. Then we shall understand why, in the very place where he tells of the death of Beatrice, he declares, that he cannot speak of her without praising himself. "It would not become me to speak of this, for if I did so, I should be eulogising myself; and as this is always to be avoided, so I leave the subject for another's examination." Vita Nuova. p. 48.

We promise, too, that Petrarch shall confess himself to be Laura; that Boccaccio shall declare himself one with Fiammetta; and that a multitude of Platonic lovers, of

and we shall behold a lady veiled with a three-coloured veil like Beatrice's, *white, green,* and *red,* and we shall see the trinitarian angels, or princes of piety, enter into an alliance with love, who is called "The preserved from the waters." The three-coloured veil was called the veil of error, as their rituals will prove to us.

* There was a very slight difference in the sectarian theories of Dante and Cecco, which we shall explain elsewhere.

the same and of succeeding ages, shall identify themselves with their ladies.

Septuagerian as he was, we cannot much marvel at the fate which befell Cecco. His audacity prompted him to outrun Dante in his career of defiance; and he published his profane doctrines with a seeming anxiety to be distinguished beyond any of his friends. "Why are the bells rang at a time of calamity? Because their sound breaks the air, and takes away the pestilence. So those *evil spirits*, who are envious of mankind, raise a storm for their own purposes. But, if we sound the divine trumpet, they will fly before us: this is a secret Dante never knew." Literally taken, this is a wonderful secret indeed! But how did he find out that Dante knew nothing of it? Cecco, while feigning to write on natural history, takes every opportunity of offering an insult to the *great enemy*. Thus, as the crab entices the oyster to its own destruction, "so acts the enemy of mankind. Happy is he who escapes his net, by casting over him bridle and curb." There is a similar passage in Dante, on the same theme: "But you take the bait, and suffer the old adversary's hook to draw you towards himself." The basilisk has a venom which causes instant death; but the weasel has some means of counteracting it: "So the soul has the power, finally, to destroy the great enemy." The hyæna counterfeits the human voice, to devour men: "So the enemy leads us to death, if we listen to his false tongue; and, feigning to pray, he devours us." The eagle, vulture, and hawk, being the natural enemies of serpents, are frequently alluded to. Thus Barberino says, that Love had the talons of a hawk. And Dante, when he tramples on the earth (Purg. 19.), compares himself with a falcon. Cecco says, that the vulture, "bound in the skin of the wolf and the lion, was able to repel Satan, the great worm, and every spirit."

He compares the sectarians, who, in revenge for affronts received, turned informers against their brethren, to the

elephant, who poisons himself in his efforts to destroy the dragon: "Thus acts the cruel man; endeavouring to wound others, he poisons himself. Look to the end, before you make a beginning, or offend; and think not that you have to deal with the foolish *sect*." This reminds us of that Bracciarone, of Pisa, who revealed some of the secrets of the sect he had quitted, and thereby exposed himself to its wrath: "A new desire has sprung up in my heart, prompting me to declare how sad is the condition of those who follow the *false Love*. For some time, I was devoted to it; but now I will bear witness of what I know, and expose the wickedness of those who follow its laws, and celebrate the cause of their ruin and misfortunes, viz.: that Love, whom they unceasingly hope to see crowned as the emperor of all good. The madmen! they cover themselves with a shield thinner than a spider's web. How is it, that the world cannot see through it?* Why are not all men on their guard against the perfidious snares, which render those who fall into them rebels both to God and man? I will no longer remain in their *sect*. I have been often ensnared; but Love is no more my master. I have ceased to be his servant, since I discovered the precipice on which I was treading. I left him, when I found myself almost forgetting God. O unhappy ones! beware where your Love leads you; for, one day, you will see it in all its deformity, and then you will loathe it more than the devil!"

The Analy. Comm. quotes the remainder of this canzone, as well as the following one, of the same Bracciarone; who, having made himself many enemies by his imprudence, exclaimed: "I ought to dread Love! *Life* and *Death* are both adverse to me; I am hated wherever I turn. *Life* detests me, and *Death* threatens me! But I will be henceforth silent on the subject; because, after

* Through this spider's web, no critic has been able to see the lovers transformed into sectarians.

all that I have told and hinted, any one may understand my meaning."

In Boccaccio's Life of Dante, we read, that while that poet and his *sect* were enjoying power in the republic, the opposite party were using all their influence with Boniface VIII. to induce him to send Charles of Valois to Florence. The members of the sect strained every nerve to frustrate this scheme. "All the chief ones met together at a council, and there came to the resolution of sending an embassy to the Pope, to urge him to forbid the coming of Charles; and if that were unavailing, they determined to implore the aid of him whom, with one accord, they acknowledged their superior." But the Pope who was perfectly aware of the true character of this *sect*, or faction, lost no time in despatching the French prince to dislodge them from their nest; and the result was, that Dante and all his sectarian friends were driven forth, condemned and banished. Now then, it seems to us, that the treachery of sectarian informers, like Bracciarone; the information given to us by Boccaccio in Dante's Life; and the punishment of Cecco d'Ascoli for a poem which later critics consider purely catholic, but which contemporary inquisitors declared heretical, are all new and convincing proofs that Rome and the holy office were fully informed of the secrets of this conventional language; and the masterly policy with which the Romish court put up with the insults heaped on it, rather than draw down more serious mischief, can never be too much admired. It saw, in fact, that these very insults, covered as they were with an external varnish of complete submission to its doctrines, contributed to keep alive the blind faith of the multitude; and by calmly looking on, without affecting to believe that they were meant for outrages, it confirmed the world in the belief that they were sincere offerings of respect; and thereby riveted its own power. It knew that the fear which made their language so ambiguous, rendered it, at the same time, almost incom-

prehensible; and events prove that it reasoned justly. The apparent simplicity of the literal version freed it from all apprehension; and the extravagance of the figures, so different from all customary styles of writing, so remote from the grasp of common minds, ensured it against any great public effect. Content with seeing its proudest enemies humbled at its feet, it enjoyed in triumph both their assumed reverence and their secret enmity; the homage was public; the hatred, stifled; and the world judged only by what it saw. What more could it desire? It was satisfied; and, without casting a thought into futurity, it slept soundly on the security of the present, until that day broke which roused it from its slumbers, and made it feel in bitterness the mighty effects of time.*

* See the note (K) at the end of the volume.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### CONFIRMATION OF VARIOUS OPINIONS ADVANCED IN THE COURSE OF THE WORK.

History attests the fact that, from its first introduction into Europe, the practices and language of the sectarian school were discovered by Rome; that shortly after the year 1000, many of its proselytes were discovered in France and Italy; but that persecution only served to render them more wary and to swell their numbers. We have already seen that, in the time of Frederic II. (1243), Ivan of Narbonne revealed its secrets to the Archbishop of Bordeaux (see the note B.); let us here look a little deeper into the contents of his letter, for we can now better comprehend and weigh its expressions.

Millot, in his History of the Troubadours, and again in his History of France, tells us that the Albigenses were called Patarins or Tartarins; and we read in Ivan's letter, that after living for a long while among the Patarini, with whose signs and secrets he became well acquainted, he went to dwell among the *Tartars*, and was an eye-witness of their iniquitous proceedings; he speaks of these last in a way to make them really be mistaken for *Tartars*, but still, by many expressions, we discover that he is speaking of the Tartarins. He knew right well that they had eyes and ears every where, and arms and daggers at their service; and a remnant of prudence, as

well as the cunning lessons taught by the jargon, probably suggested to him the advantage of making a slight alteration in the word. He says, among other things, that it is the bounden duty of every confessor and counsellor to pour into their princes' ear the story of the wickednesses committed by these Tartars, adding, "They do *ill* if they do not remonstrate, *worse* if they dissemble, and *worse* than all if they assist them."

Can we believe that any European monarch's confessor or minister did ever second or favour the Asiatic Tartars, who would have carried ruin into every kingdom? The Narbonese knew, by experience, that many ecclesiastics and courtiers were really *Tartarins*, and that they greatly promoted the success of that sect; and for that reason he wrote, *if they assist.* He afterwards says of these Tartars, "We suffer cruel enemies to dwell in the bosom of our country." These Tartars were not foreigners then, but fellow-countrymen, and they did many surprising things; — they deceived every king in Europe in time of peace, by making use of a variety of fictions, with which they were always well prepared; they endeavoured to bring back into their own country those grand monarchs, whose sacred persons adorned the city of Cologne, that is, the emperors of Germany, who had their seat of government there; they sought to punish the pride and avarice of Rome, and revenge their own former wrongs; and they falsely gave out that they had quitted their own country to go on a pilgrimage to St. James of Galicia. O most devout Tartars! And princes, deceived by these fictions, entered into treaties of friendship with these barbarians, and granted them free ingress into their states. What Tartar zeal for the emperors of Germany! What Tartar devotion for St. James of Galicia! These are the words of Ivan: "In times of peace they deceive all the people and princes of various countries, either with or without some pretext; sometimes they falsely say that they have left their

country in order to bring back those great monarchs whose sacred persons adorn the city of Cologne; and at other times, to punish the avarice and pride of those Romans who anciently oppressed them; or, to finish their pilgrimage to St. James of Galicia. Misled by these fictions, some credulous monarchs have entered into a confederacy with these Tartars, and have granted them a free passage through their dominions." And these Tartars, so apt at feigning, called their monarchs gods, and paid them worship: "They call the princes of their tribes *gods*, and, on certain occasions and solemnities, they worship them."

These were the princes of Cologne, whom they held in such high esteem. And, if we may believe other writers, these Tartars did most astounding things; they could vanish out of sight whenever they found it convenient, and so conceal themselves from their enemies and persecutors; and once upon a time their standard-bearer saved the whole Tartar army from great danger by means of this art. "Marco Paulo, the Venetian, relates that the Tartars are so clever and ingenious, and so sagacious in investigating the nature of things, that they can raise darkness whenever they will; and he relates the case of one who, by means of this art, escaped, although with difficulty, from robbers who had surrounded him. Haiton, a person of the highest learning and authority, declares also that the Tartar army being once defeated, and nearly put to flight, their standard-bearer had recourse to the same art to stop further losses, and, by enchantment, caused a thick darkness to overspread the enemy's camp."* We might almost venture to declare the name of the standard-bearer who performed this miracle, and disappeared with all his followers from before the eyes of his persecuting foes.

* Tractatus de Dignitate et Excellentia Hominis, p. 280, a pamphlet added to the *Theatrum Mundi Minoris*, translated from the French into Latin by F. Lorenzo Cupero. Antwerp, 1606.

Things not less strange than this are told of the same people. They had been shut up in the mountains of Gog and Magog, which are mentioned in the Apocalypse, by Alexander the Great; and there they remained until the year 1202, without daring to quit them; and, for this reason: Alexander had placed large trumpets at certain distances from each other on the mountains, which, whenever the wind blew, sent forth blasts of war; and, for ten centuries, these *cunning* Tartars continued to believe that Alexander was always stationed behind them, ready to fall upon them; at last, some owls built their nests in the mouths of the trumpets, and they were silent; when the Tartars, summoning up their courage, climbed up to the summits of the mountains, and saw the artifice which had kept them in a constant state of alarm for so many ages. They left their place of concealment, dispersed themselves as conquerors into many countries, and from that time held the owl in great honour. They chose a chief whom they mounted upon a *Greyhound*, and called *Dog*, which in their language signifies *Emperor*. This Dog was very wise and brave, and, when he quitted the mountains, he divided the people into tens, and hundreds, and thousands, and set over them captains to lead them to battle; by which means he was enabled to conquer Prester John, and make him his tributary. We do not exactly know whether this Tartar emperor, called Dog, has any connection with that other Dog or Greyhound, whose birth or country was to be between either Feltro; but of this we are certain, that the whole legend of the trumpets on the hills of Gog and Magog, and the effect of the wind upon them, together with the account of the owls, who, by closing the trumpets' mouths, delivered the Tartars from their causeless fears, and of Prester John, who was made the subject of the Dog, &c. is all a conventional fable which perhaps some even now comprehend, before they have heard it explained.

This tale is in the twentieth Day of the *Pecorone* of John of Florence, and was written in 1378, during the reign of Charles IV., Emperor of the Romans. Its allegorical language is extremely ingenious; the first half of the book contains novels of love; the second is almost filled with details concerning the wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, and the dissensions between the Emperors and the Popes. In the two tales which occupy the ninth day, he gives an account of the building of Florence by the noble Romans, and of its destruction by the barbarous Totila.

Prester John, the tributary of the Emperor of the Tartars, will explain to us the mystery of the beforementioned miraculous disappearance. In the Hundred Tales of the *Gentle Language*, written for those of *noble heart* and *subtle intellect*, in which language *flowers are mixed with other words* (preface of the author), we read as follows: "Prester John once sent the Emperor Frederic II. who was very fond of *gentle language*, a present of three very valuable stones; but that monarch had no idea how to make use of them. Prester John's lapidary addressed Frederic one day as follows: 'Sire, this stone (the first) is worth your best city; this one (the second) is worth your finest province; and this last is worth more than your whole empire.' Thus saying, he took hold of the three stones; and the virtue of the last concealed him from the view of the emperor and the people. So the lapidary vanished from their sight, and carried back the stones to Prester John, because Frederic II. did not know how to make a proper use of them." This is the first of the Hundred Tales in the *Gentle Language*, and the others are all of the same nature.

This Prester John, according to the testimony of numberless writers of romance, was a native of Tartary, or a Cathari, a countryman of that Angelica, the daughter of the king of the Cathari, who had a stone with which she could vanish from the sight whenever she felt inclined, merely by putting

it *into her mouth;* but of this lady we have no time now to speak. "Cathari—in ancient geography a people of India. The Cathari came from Greece into Italy, and were first discovered in the Milanese, about the middle of the eleventh century. They were called in France and other countries, Albigenses, Patarini, Paulicians, and Puritans. These Cathari held many tenets of the Manicheans. The general assembly of the Manicheans was headed by a president, who represented Jesus Christ, who had twelve apostles and seventy-two bishops, the image of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord." (Rees' Cyclo. art. Cathari—Manicheans.)

With this talismanic stone in the mouth, the organ of speech, or in the hand, which guides the pen, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and a hundred more, are able to vanish from before our eyes. And what is this miraculous stone? It is the word of God; *the stone is Christ* (Cor. 1.); and the angels taught that sectarian who visited them at all times that, the ancient word of God is still preserved among some people of eastern Tartary, with the relative worship, by correspondences; and those angels who had spent the days of their mortal life there, affirmed that it is the *ancient word.* (Swedenborg. Ab. de la Nouv. Jér. Cel. p. 135. Stockholm, 1788.)

So long as this jargon is confined to romances, we are accustomed to view its extravagances in the light of excusable follies, and we never suspect that it conveys any hidden meaning; but when it enters into history and biography, then we become sensible of its incongruity and departure from probabilities. Hence it is that the lives of many of the Provençal Troubadours, as written by Nostradamus and the Monk of the Golden Isles, have been declared by modern critics, and among others by Millot and Sismondi, to be mere wild chimerical tales. The authors had recourse to the jargon, because they wrote on dangerous subjects, and the critics, who were not versed in that jargon, followed the literal meaning, and

branded them as tellers of falsehoods. For instance, the celebrated Troubadour, Pier Vidal, pretended to be a Guelph and a partisan of the Guelphic power, and so artfully did he write, and so far carry the illusion, that he was persecuted incessantly by his own party. But could his biographers have published this, without revealing the grand secret? No, and therefore they wrote that for several years, Pier Vidal went about covered with the skin of a wolf, to show that he was enamoured with a lady of that name; and that he carried this madness so far, that he was actually hunted as a wolf, and pursued and seriously wounded by huntsmen and dogs. They add too, that he afterwards boasted of having dressed himself as a wolf for Madonna Wolf! and all agree, that putting aside this incredible insanity, he was one of the most sensible and elegant of the Provençal writers; and that his words were quite at variance with his actions. Besides Pier Vidal, we find that many other Troubadours, as Raimond di Miraval, the Conte de Foix, the Seigneur de Scissac, the Seigneurs of Mirepoix and Monreal were lovers of this same Lady Wolf. And yet those who call themselves reasoning creatures persist in interpreting these tales literally! If we would perfectly understand the meaning of Pier Vidal's singular costume, we must see how the sect figured itself. To show how it was inwardly at war, and outwardly at peace with the object of its satire, it represented itself at the beginning of its works, covered with a wolf's skin, full of eyes and ears to denote vigilance; and from its mouth appeared the motto *Favete linguis*, that is: Take heed to my words. The brethren at Brussels, in 1743, "caused a medal to be struck, which represented on one side a heap of rough *stones*, with this inscription, *Æqua lege sortitur insignes et imos;* on the other side appeared Silenus covered with a skin of a wolf, full of eyes and ears, and from a cornucopia which he held in one hand, he poured out squares and other

instruments of masonry. He lays the other hand upon his mouth, with these words, *Favete linguis.*" (J. Scott, The Pocket Companion and History of Free Masons, p. 301. London 1759.)

This conceit has produced all those singular tales; sometimes dressed in the romantic, and sometimes in the historical garb, which transform men into wolves, and wolves into men, and make wolves not only talk, but protect sheep. In the same Work of Wecker *On Secrets*, which teaches how to *speak secretly*, we find a collection of very curious secrets, taken from various allegorical writers. Such is that which shows in figures what poets did when they desired to compose satirical works, and escape all danger. "If hearts-ease *(pensée)* be gathered, and wrapped in a *laurel* leaf with a *wolf's tooth*, it will secure those who carry it about them against any chance of meeting with reproaches. Albert (of Villanova) is the author of this secret." (P. 879, Rouen, 1639.) The precaution of wrapping his thoughts in the leaves of a laurel did not, however, secure that writer against the Pope's persecutions. The following secret shows how to preserve a family of Love against scrutinizing enemies. "It is thought that a *wolf's head*, either by its smell, or by some secret power, when hung up before a *dove*-cote, drives away ferrets, pole-cats, and weasels." (Corn. Agrippa, p. 380.)

In Dante's Vita Nuova, there are things which plainly declare themselves to be fictions. Putting aside his various dreams, we may bring forward a most convincing instance of this. He says that he wrote down seventy ladies' names in a sirvente, and that, wonderful to say, the name of his own lady would not stay in any number but nine! Extravagances not less palpable than this, we read in Boccaccio's Life of Dante; such are his mother's dream before his birth, and his son's dream after his death; but both these visions are full of important matter, to those who can comprehend them. And in how many

and various ways, did the old novelists explain Dante's secret? Their tales are outwardly meaningless or absurd, and inwardly full of information. From their number, we will here select the shortest, by way of a specimen of the others.

The words *to raise* (sublimare) and *to pull down* (adimare) were often used in opposition to each other, and applied to the different parties. We explained, in our commentary, that the *horse* is a symbol of the empire; and Dante indicates this in the 6th canto of the Purgatory. Now let us hear the 114th tale of Franco Sacchetti. "That most excellent poet, Dante Alighieri the Florentine, whose fame will endure for ever, lived in Florence near the family of the *Adimari*. One of this family was accused of some *crime*, and was condemned according to the laws of justice by the *executor* of those laws (*Executor of Justice*, Dante calls the Emperor in the Monarchia), who was on terms of friendship with the said Dante. The accused intreated Dante to intercede for him with the *executor*, which he willingly agreed to do, and accordingly set out on his way. As he passed the *gates of St. Peter's*, he was very indignant at hearing his own poem spoiled and deformed by the way in which it was sung. When he came to the executor's, he remembered that the accused Adimare was a haughty ungracious youth, who rode on his horse so awkwardly that he *took up the whole road*, and that he had often remarked and blamed his conduct; therefore he said to the executor—I come to speak to you in favour of the cavalier whom you have cited before your court for a certain crime; his behaviour is deserving of a severe punishment; for I consider it a very great crime to usurp what is *common* property. Hearing this, the other demanded what *common* property had been usurped. Dante answered: When he rides through the city, he takes up so much room, that those who meet him are obliged to turn

back, and cannot prosecute their journey.* This is a greater crime than the other, cried the executor. I am his neighbour, replied Dante, I *recommend* him to you. When he returned home, the cavalier asked him what he had done, and Dante told him that he had received a *favourable answer*. After some days had elapsed, the cavalier was summoned before the executor; and there, after his first crime was read over to him, the judge caused the second charge, viz. that of taking up the public way, to be read to him likewise. When the accused heard his crime thus doubled, he thought within himself—I have gained a great deal by Dante's interference! I expected to be acquitted, and behold my punishment will be aggravated. When he found Dante, he said to him: You have served me a pretty trick! Before you went to the executor, he intended to condemn me on one charge, but since your visit, I am accused of another crime. Had you been my own son, cried Dante, *I could not have recommended you more strongly*. The other shook his head and departed; and in a few days, he was ordered to pay a fine of a thousand livres for each offence. Neither he, nor any of the house of Adimare ever forgot this circumstance, and it was the *principal cause* of Dante's speedy banishment from Florence. He was sent away as *a White*, and died in exile." What a collection of improbabilities! Here is an Adimare heavily fined for riding on horseback! And that is called *usurping the public road!* He prevented passengers from passing in the streets of Florence, and forced them to take another way! And the poet, because he pretended to excuse him, and accused him all the while, was sent

* Virgil. "But thou, say wherefore to such perils past
Return'st thou?"
Dante. "See the beast from whom I fled."
Virgil. "Thou must needs another way pursue,—
This beast at whom thou criest, her way will
Suffer none to pass."

into exile as a White. This constituted his crime! Sacchetti inserted this story between two others, which inform us that the Divine Comedy was the accusation which Dante carried before the executor under the pretence of justifying the Adimare, whom he thus completely humbled; and that the poem, in being read by those who could not understand its meaning, was completely distorted from its real sense; the title of these two stories runs thus: "Dante Alighieri shows a smith and an ass-driver the *error* they commit, by singing his poem with *new* words." In the first place, he relates, that as the poet was passing *St. Peter's gate*, on his way to accuse the Adimare whom he was pretending to favour, he saw a smith sitting at that gate singing his verses with his own additions and alterations, which seemed to Dante to be very injurious to the poem; he forthwith overset all the bungler's tools, saying: "Cease to spoil my work, unless you want your own spoilt also; you are singing my verses, but not as I wrote them." The second story runs, that an ass-driver, whose panniers were filled with rubbish, was walking along singing Dante's verses, and that between the intervals of singing, he struck the ass, and cried *Arri*. Dante hearing this, gave him a smart tap on the shoulder, saying: I did not put that *Arri* in my verses. The driver gave the ass another blow, and repeated *Arri*, snapping his fingers at Dante. And Sacchetti calls these, *sweet words*, full of *philosophy!* This exclamation, which has been for so many ages considered as nothing, as well as the whole account of Dante's meeting with the ass-driver, is of the same character as all the tales written by Sacchetti. According to the inward or outward sense of the poem, he distinguishes the Alighieri of men and the Alighieri of asses; and he attained to such skill in the use of the jargon, that he even discovered a means of saying that Dante's hell is descriptive of the papal government. He tells a story of some pope who asked an abbé what is done in hell; and he says that

the answer was in these words: In hell, they cut to pieces, quarter, seize, and hang, exactly as you do here. What reason do you give for this? asked the Pope. *I talked with one who had been there*, answered the other, *and Dante the Florentine had from him, all the things which he wrote concerning the hell.* These are Sacchetti's words, and for the rest of the story we must refer the reader to the fourth novel. In fact, the whole of his book is written in conventional language, intermixed with secret ciphers. The wolf figures in a great many of them; and there is one more curious than the rest, which relates that a *wolf* of Port-*Venus* once got possession of a bark, and began sailing in it. ("O bark of mine! how badly art thou freighted!" *Dante.*) And here the author reflects: "These things are shown to us *in figures* by the Eternal God." It is to be observed that in the fragment which we still possess of Sacchetti's proem, he confesses that in the composition of his work, he followed the footsteps of Dante and Boccaccio. "Considering the present times, and the condition of *human life*, so often visited by *obscure deaths*, and considering that excellent Florentine Giovanni Boccaccio — I, Franco Sacchetti, determined to write the present work; following the example of the Florentine poet, Dante." And hence, in many of his cunning tales, he conveys by the conventional jargon the hidden meanings of Dante and Boccaccio, as well as those of their contemporaries.

For the reasons we have before adduced, and which, indeed, are self evident, it is much more difficult to discover the secret meanings of tales and romances, than when the same meanings are conveyed in the form of a history: and the more nearly the narrator is connected with his history, so much the more visible is his fiction; this is the fault of Boccaccio's Life of Dante.

When the sectarian writer employs the conventional language to write his own, or another's life, then, indeed, he makes himself appear a madman, and excites pity,

laughter, and contempt. Dante, by speaking as a poet, steered clear of this error, but Swedenborg, discoursing as an historian, fell into its very extreme. And although in substance both did the same thing, yet the different way in which that thing was done, caused the first to be, what he will always be, held up to the admiration and wonder of every age, as a sublime poet; while the last is almost forgotten; and when by chance mentioned, his name is associated only with ideas of insanity; and those who quote him, run the risk of being laughed at. Still, whoever reads his works, and attentively weighs his words, will see the real meaning of the language which did him so much discredit, as well as of his journeys to Heaven and Hell, and his conversations with the angels and demons; and will finally perceive that the ravings of the madman explain the fictions of the sage. Has the thought never occurred to any one, that the man who displays so much vigour of mind in a variety of works on poetry, philosophy, mathematics, and natural history*, and who speaks continually of the language of correspondence, which gives a secret meaning to the smallest trifle, on the system of the ancient schools of the East, which he lauds to the skies; that a man, in short, who even in his most extravagant fits, displays an immense store of sacred and profane learning, and an uncommon share of penetration, designedly concealed a profound meaning under his delusive language? It is only necessary to reflect that, he professed a religion of philanthropy, and consequently gave to the abstract idea of a perfect man, the name of Man—God calling all those who aspired to that perfection angels and spirits, and making their union Heaven, and its opposite Hell. We are intimately persuaded that this ancient institution, which reckons among its brethren so many celebrated men of every age, coun-

* Read the art. *Swedenborg*, in the Historical Dictionary, for an account of the vastness and variety of his learning. He may be considered as the first founder of the science of Phrenology, which Gall afterwards extended.

try and religion, is of more importance than is generally supposed, and has a more positive end in view; its thoughts are of this world, of the present life, of man's concerns, although its words are of another world, of a future life, of God and of angels. This is the inheritance bequeathed by the ancient school; Lenoir, and others, confirm it, and Vico agrees in the opinion: "At first, *all human things* were looked at under the appearance of *things divine:*" (Scienza Nuova, ch. 34.) and this is precisely the case with the sectarians, who have a great end in view. They teach, that happiness is the result of moral conduct and good order in society; that all men ought to be free and equal, all brethren; but as they know that such ideas, in the present state of society, and with the various classes into which it is divided, and in the heads of government and religion, would be met with unconquerable aversion, they proceed darkly in their labours. Hence their outward worship is like our own; but by the science of correspondences it is made different. "There is in heaven," says Swedenborg, "a divine worship outwardly like our own, but inwardly unlike. I was admitted into the temple of heaven, and attended their sermons; the basis of their instructions is always, the divine nature of the Lord made human, and his human nature made divine." (p. 38.) The real nature of the Lord of the ancient sectarians is by this time perfectly well known to us from their own writings; neither is it unknown to our contemporaries: "Terebintus and Manes, and *their successors*, gave out that they themselves, respectively were *incarnations* or *avatars* of that same principal hero—God, who had once revealed himself in the person of the man Jesus." Thus writes the living English clergyman, G. Stanley Faber. (Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, vol. i. p. 126.) We will here cite a few passages from the New Jerusalem of Swedenborg, which is the key to all his writings. "There is between the good and the wicked *the same difference* which exists between *hea-*

*ven and hell.* (309.) There are two men, the spiritual and the natural, or the inward and outward man. (18.) The inward spiritual man is really *in heaven, and in correspondence with the heavenly spirits, even during his earthly life*, which is not, properly speaking, a life; for the true man *begins to live when he dies.*—The natural, or outward man is generally *false and hypocritical*, because *he is double*—we cannot rightly judge of human sciences, without knowing that there are *two men in us*,* the inward and the outward, which are but one in spiritual life, in the religious man; but they are separated *in the learned man*, according to the world. This learned man is *purely outward*, like his learning†, and his inward qualities serve only to preserve his life. (327 to 332.) ‡ The science of correspondences was, among the ancients, the science of sciences.§ This science was known to the Orientals and the Egyptians, who expressed it by signs and hieroglyphics, which, in course of time, were misunderstood, and produced idolatry. Every thing is imagery and correspondence. (82, 83.) ‖ *Names, customs, numbers* even, signify spiritual and important things. I have seen very simple men arrive in heaven, and as soon as they participated in the angelic wisdom, they understood and talked as they had never done before. The wisdom

* To rightly judge these works, we must know that they have *two meanings*, the *false or hypocritical* meaning, according to the outward man; the *sincere and true* meaning, according to the inward man.

† A correct portrait of the *external* Dante.

‡ The inward preserves the truth or life, the outward expresses *death* or *error;* hence the ladies, who figure the outward man *die*, and their lovers, who figure the inward man, *live.*

§ So we shall hear the sectarian science called, by one of the greatest men England or the world ever produced.

‖ A note to p. 84 says that Virgil was initiated into the science of correspondences, and the mysteries of the eastern priesthood; and that he made use of them in his eclogues and poem, especially in the sixth book; this opinion is confirmed by the learned Bishop Warburton, and by Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and many others.

of the angels cannot be perfectly explained, but a general idea may be given of it. To show me one proof of this wisdom, an angel explained to me the order and *mysteries of regeneration;* and each of those mysteries gave birth to ideas which all contained a multitude of other secret ones, touching this regeneration, in which man is born and raised spiritually, as he was naturally (the new life.)— The angels of the third heaven * are such, because they are sharers in the Lord's love, which opens the third degree of the inward spirit, the receptacle of all wisdom. These angels of the third heaven increase in wisdom by the medium of the *ear*, and not by means of the *eye*.† The ear answers to perception, the eye to intelligence. By this science, we understand what the Baptism and the Last Supper signify; we know that man is born again after his death: that he has a body, form and senses, as he had on earth, except that instead of being material, this man is spiritual, but still a *real and perfect* man; that in the spiritual world he sees the same objects, and lives and acts with his fellow-creatures, as in the terrestrial world; that the wonders of heaven and earth have been revealed, and that he knows their pleasures and their pains, &c. &c.; that there are three degrees in life which correspond with the three heavens; that the spirit of man is distinguished and divided into three degrees, the natural, spiritual, and heavenly; and that God is the Holy Trinity, one in person and in essence. He will soon establish a new church, whose doctrine he has revealed, and prove the inward meaning of the Apocalypse, which is

* Where man is changed into a woman, with very high mysteries; hence Cecco d'Ascoli, "I am in the third heaven, *transformed* in to this lady— I am she."

† By means of the oral science, which is *heard*, and not by writing or emblems, which are *seen* — dangerous secrets were not trusted to paper. The *eyes* and *mouth* of Madonna, called by Dante her *first* and *second* beauty, signify *intelligence*, examining the symbols; and oral communication explaining them. The Comedy, the Vita Nuova, and the Convito, all make repeated mention of these two beauties.

prophetic of the coming of this new church, which the Scripture calls every where the New Jerusalem. (181 and foll.) The Romish clergy, who have criminally profaned God's word, and wrested its meaning,—the Romish clergy, who have made trade and merchandize of the Lord's religion, and the faithless pastor, who takes care of himself, and not of his flock, are positively pointed at and reproved in the Apocalypse, on the subject of the New Jerusalem, and the destruction of the Romish church is there formally declared. I can attest that I have learnt all this in heaven. I have been for several years in the spiritual and earthly world. I have seen heaven and hell, and talked with angels and spirits; the Lord has opened the eyes of my mind; he has revealed to me the inward meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and he has ordered me to announce the approaching establishment of his new church, which is the New Jerusalem." (241.)

We find the following, written down in the rituals of that heaven in whose secret places Swedenborg learnt all we have just heard: "*The New Jerusalem* represents *ancient Freemasonry*, which comes down from heaven to replace the *ancient Temple;* which is represented by the ruins, and *three-headed serpent* underneath. The draft, or carpet, of the lodge, represents a square city, or the *Celestial Jerusalem*, descending on clouds from heaven to crush the remains of the *three-headed serpent*, or hydra, in chains; representing the wickedness of the infidels yet remaining there. This Celestial Jerusalem has twelve gates, three on each side. The present Jerusalem (the false one), underneath, seems to be turned upside down; and the Celestial Jerusalem appears to crush the *three-headed* serpent. On one side of the draft, you see a high mountain. Q. Where does St. John say this? A. In his Revelation, where he speaks of Babylon and the Celestial Jerusalem. Q. What is the meaning of the twelve golden stars, on the fillet of the candidate? A. They represent the twelve angels," &c.—(See Light on Masonry, degree

of Grand Pontiff, p. 234.) These are the twelve apostles of Swedenborg. And here we may consider, too, that the twelve stars, round the head of the candidate, are the very same twelve stars which shine round the head of the august lady of the Revelations; who is here transformed into a man. "Twelve golden stars on the fillet of the candidate." "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."—(Rev. xii. 1.) *

To enter into the hidden spirit of many emblems, we must repeatedly remind ourselves of this great truth: viz. that every symbol is a mystery for meditation; nothing is done, nothing is said, nothing is offered, which is not worthy of an examination; names, numbers, colours, forms, every thing, in short, (as we have heard before from the learned Swede) is an indication, a meaning, a concealed truth, or what they consider one; truths most perilous, and therefore wrapped in double and triple veils. "Take away the spirit of our mysteries, and they become ridiculous," wrote a learned sectarian, whom we have elsewhere cited. Hence, the more a thing is seemingly extravagant, the more may we conclude it to be significant; and, therefore, strive to search out its inward meaning. Nothing is done by chance; and this is an axiom which we must never cease to bear in mind.

Nine years old were Dante and Beatrice, when they fell in love with each other; and the degree, called the Non plus ultra, is the 18th, or 9 doubled. I find, in the rituals, that, even in the first degree, the neophyte is presented with two pair of gloves;† and, such is the inward spirit contained in them, that he is asked, in the second degree:

* "Already is the moon beneath our feet," (Inf. 29.) says Virgil to Dante, when they stand over the three-faced Lucifer "the three-headed serpent underneath," or the false Jerusalem.

† In the catechism of the first degree, it is written: "Did they give you nothing more on receiving you as a mason? They gave me some men's and women's gloves, of the same colour."—(*Recueil précieux* de la *Maç. Adonhir*, with the false date of Philadelphia, 1785.)

"Where is your spirit?" and he answers, "In the apron and in the gloves." (Les Fr. Maç. p. 276.) Swedenborg says, that his angels are males and females; and, from what he adds, it is clear that in all of them are hidden the qualities of male and female. "The angels will be eternally men, male and female, husband and wife. Heavenly marriage is far different from earthly marriage; it is the *union of two, in one spirit and one soul;* it is the union of *intelligence and will, of good and truth.*" (On Marriages in Heaven, &c. p. 333.)

Rees's Cyclopedia declares, that the chief of the Manichees figured Christ: Faber asserts, that their chief believed himself to be Christ: Lenoir says, that the head of his sect represents God, like the head of the ancient Egyptian sect: and the books, written in the jargon, on Platonic Love teach, that God (or him whom they so call,) is male, female, and a compound of both. And this is the *sacred mystery* of the Platonic Love, which wept and laughed under a bandage. "We call the *sun*, masculine; the *moon*, either male or female; and the *earth*, feminine." (M. Ficino. Com. on the Banquet of Plato.)

We now turn to another point, which well deserves our consideration. That *death* and *new birth*, which Swedenborg speaks of at great length, is relative to these two sexes, united in one person. In the third degree, *death* and *resurrection* is figured in an emblematic ceremony; in which the Master, killed by *three* blows, returns to a new life. "By the corpse and grave, is represented the state of man, before he had known the happiness of our order. You have been raised from the grave of ignorance to the celestial place, where *Truth* resides." (Light on Masonry, p. 258. These words are in the degree called *the key*.) The outward man is dead, the inward one alive, says Swedenborg. In other words, *the moon covers the sun:* there is inward *light*, outward *darkness;* hidden *truth*, apparent *falsehood*. Here we see the dead body and the living man united in the same; who is both

outward and inward man. Here we see the dead Beatrice and the living Dante; the dead Laura and the living Petrarch; the dead Fiammetta and the living Boccaccio; the dead Selvaggia, the living Cino; the dead Teresa, the living Ausias; &c. &c. Meaning this: that, *outwardly*, the sectarian conformed to the ways of those who were, according to them, in error; and that, *inwardly*, he was with those few who knew the truth. The one is described as parted, as away from the other; and hence the lover and his beloved are considered as two, until they are identified with each other, and united into one. "The man, who is *inwardly* so, *does not die;* he only puts off his earthly covering, and rises again with the same affections he felt at the moment of his death; and he appears in the world of spirits with an *interior* and an *exterior*. The spirit—man outwardly appears like the man who is alive on the earth (p. 75). Regeneration is a spiritual new birth: man is regenerated by degrees (p. 187). Heavenly joys belong to no place: heaven is not a place, but the inward state of the angel's life; the heaven of the angel is in himself (p. 377). Regenerated man has a new will, and a new understanding; because he has, *inwardly*, passed from the society of infernal spirits to the society of the angels of heaven (that is, from the profane to the elect). He answers to the three heavens, by the three degrees of his interior and exterior. These three degrees are opened by regeneration: the first is of *love*, and corresponds with the heaven supreme; the second, or that of *wisdom*, corresponds with the middle heaven; the third, which is the use of Love and Wisdom, corresponds with the third heaven. The misfortunes of man, which correspond with the miseries of hell, are replaced by the happiness of heaven." (Page 189.)

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ON THE FIVE EPOCHS OF THE SECT.

If the weariness produced by Swedenborg's endless arguments were not a little tempered by the pleasure of discovering the truth, we should not have so incumbered our pages with them. The system of his ancient school, entirely established on metaphysical antitheses, — that system called the Gay Science in the middle ages, is more minutely and variously developed by him than by any other writer. The two foundation stones on which it rests, are, as we have already said, *good* and *evil;* and the two producing sources are *God* and *Lucifer;* the first, the principle of *light* or *truth*, the other of *darkness* or *error;* and, by their influence, the earth becomes either a heaven or a hell, either a terrestrial paradise or a savage wood. Hence, in the catechisms of the world of spirits, where angels are guides and masters, the neophyte, who is born anew under their eyes, is said to quit the *darkness of Egypt*, and to behold *a new heaven and a new earth*,* and to be in the plains of the earthly paradise, where he is plunged into a river until the

* "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth — and I John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." (Rev. xxi. 1.)

*waters reach as high as his hair*,* exactly as Dante was bathed in the river of the earthly paradise.

This great system of secret instruction invites us to cast a rapid glance over the five distinct epochs of the sect. The first is very ancient; the second was in the middle ages; the third, in the time of Dante; the fourth, in the last century; and the fifth, in our own days.

We read in many historians of irreproachable testimony, and we have but lately seen in Rees, that the doctrine of the Albigenses, or Patarini, or Cathari, was, in a great measure, the doctrine of the Manichees; founded on good and evil, and on the good and evil Deity; and that that doctrine came into Europe by means of the Paulicians, who were driven out from the East; hence the Abbé Pluquet writes, in his Dict. of Heresies, art. *Albigeois*, "It is certain, by all the monuments of the time of the Albigenses, that these heretics were a branch of the Manichees or Cathari." The well-informed writers on the present secret doctrines, and particularly Reghellini, are of the same opinion, and they give their reasons for it; elsewhere we purpose bringing forward valid witnesses, both ancient and modern, to show the connection between the Albigenses and the Manichees, and between the present sect and the Albigenses.

The same witnesses inform us, that the chief of the society of the Manichees figured Jesus Christ, with twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples;* and we shall see this reproduced in the sects of Dante's time. According to a Manichean theory, man, born innocent in the earthly paradise, (that is, on this earth,) was seduced by the old serpent (error). "As soon as man is placed in

* See the before-cited work of the Fr. Maç. p. 231. 235. 261. 262. And see also canto 31 of Dante's Purgatory. "Immerged me where't was fit the wave should drench me — and dragged me high as to my neck into the stream."

† The Quadriregio, or Course of Life, is divided into seventy-two cantos.

the earthly paradise, Satan appears on the scene, tempts and seduces him." (Pluquet, Manic.) And we must observe their doctrine if we would know the whole machinery of Dante's poem; we must hear what was done by Sylvanus, the first disciple and successor of Manes, as well as the belief of his proselytes. "He established a doctrine which appeared all drawn from the Scriptures, as the catholics receive them. — They supposed a God supreme, but they attributed the government of the world to another principle, the empire of which does not extend further than this world, and will finish with the world.* It was *in the earth's centre* that those formidable powers, the gods of evil, resided. — *Darkness* was the evil principle, and the source of all misery.† They looked upon *light* as a spirit; and considered the good principle to be a pure, spiritual, and happy light, which, to communicate its blessing, had produced other intelligences and formed heavens,‡ and a court of happy beings as beneficent as itself. As for the evil principle, it dwelt in the *centre of night*,§ and was a dark and material spirit. Constantly in a state of restless movement, he had produced spirits like himself — dark, unquiet, and turbulent, over whom he reigned. The abode of this evil principle was filled with spirits, who were essentially in a state of movement,‖ because it is only happiness which is calm, and the movements of these troubled spirits, like the restlessness of unhappy mortals, had neither design nor order — discord reigned throughout their empire. The evil principle is the cause of all the misfortunes of the universe; it ruined mankind, and

* That is, after the figurative Universal Judgment.

† *Darkness* or *error*, opposed to *light* or *truth*.

‡ This language is, like Swedenburg's, entirely figurative.

§ He says before, the *centre of the earth*; where Dante placed it, describing it as a material spirit, in constant movement, with wings, teeth, and nails.

‖ This is the law imposed on Dante's condemned. See Inf. 15 & 16.

gained possession of the empire of the world." This is precisely what Dante, Bartolo, Frezzi, Palingenius, and others, wrote in figures. Pluquet, deceived by the conventional language, has described as the real Manichean doctrines, all the figures and tropes which they employed; but had he only reflected that their chief figured himself as Christ, he would soon have understood who figured his very opposite, and perceived that that Christ, as well as the mystic crucifixion and resurrection of which he speaks, were metaphors which bore a hidden signification. The same thing may be said of the souls which pass into the moon — and the *idle* souls who were condemned, for their negligence, to keep the demons confined in their prisons; like the souls of those idle ones, placed by Dante in the courts of the infernal prison. We may here behold the effects which were then and are still produced by that artful language, and particularly with regard to Dante. "The Manichees deceived a great many. The severity with which they were treated, and the strictness with which they were watched, rendered the Albigenses more circumspect, and did not destroy the heresy. They made a great progress in Languedoc and Provence; and, though many of them were burnt, the sect was not destroyed. They made their way into Germany and England, and every where gained many proselytes." (Pluquet, Dict. des Hér. art. Manichéens, Silvan, Albigeois.) Having brought the first sectarian epoch to join that of the middle ages, we will now descend to the fourteenth century, when Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Cino, Barberino, Montemagno, Fazio, Sacchetti, John of Florence, the Bishop Frezzi and others, lived and wrote.

The sectarian fiction of the earthly paradise was then more than ever employed by a branch of the sect of the Patarini or Cathari, called *Lollards,* from the celebrated Walter Lollard their chief. We may tell whom he figured, by the fact of his choosing twelve apostles to

send about seeking for proselytes. But the sad fate which overtook him and his followers, made the survivors redouble their caution, dissimulation, and consequently their hypocrisy. That was indeed an age fertile in sects and fictions! What a scene of attempts on one side, and of cruelty on the other! Pluquet, in his article on *Lollards*, writes: "Notwithstanding the crusades, which had exterminated so many heretics, and the inquisitors who had burnt an infinite number, and the funeral piles which had been lighted for the sectarians throughout Europe — notwithstanding all this, new sects sprang up every day, who parted themselves into several branches, and renewed all the errors of the Manichees, Cathari, and Albigenses, &c. It was thus that Walter Lollard formed a sect: — He chose twelve men from among his disciples, whom he called his apostles, and these travelled every year through Germany, to strengthen the faith of those who had adopted his opinions. Among these twelve disciples, there were two old men, whom they called the ministers of the sect; and who feigned that they entered the earthly paradise every year, and received power from Enoch and Elias to remit the sins of their own sect; they communicated this power to several others, in every city and town.* The inquisitors caused Lollard to be arrested, and, not being able to vanquish his obstinacy, they condemned him. He went to the flames without the least fear or repentance; and, after his death, a vast number of his disciples were discovered and burnt likewise. But the fire which consumed his body, did not destroy his opinions. In Germany, in Flanders, and in England they spread; and the disputes between this last country and the court of Rome were of great service to the progress of the sect

* See, in Petrarch's 52d sonnet, the account of the *ministers of love* who went to meet him when he arrived in Italy. "These ministers have much puzzled the commentators — I candidly acknowledge that I cannot divine them." (De Sade.)

among the English. They joined the Wickliffites, and prepared the schism of Henry VIII., while their brethren in Bohemia were preparing the people for the errors of John Huss." These were the advantages Rome derived from her ferocious cruelties and inhuman slaughters. And we may well imagine how incessantly cunning, the fruit of fear, laboured to revenge itself on them. Irreparable ruin never fails to fall on that power which governs by oppression.

With respect to the last century, we need not add any thing to the testimony of Swedenborg. He wrote of the approaching fall of Papal Rome, which he declared to be the Babylon of the Revelations, and of the speedy foundation of the New Jerusalem, which was appointed to succeed it; and he related that Jesus Christ sent his twelve apostles into the world on the 19th of June, 1770, to prepare the way for that great event. With regard to our own days, it will be sufficient if we turn back to what immediately follows the last mentioned declaration, and see what is said of the sectarian degree of the Grand Pontiff, crowned with twelve stars, the figure of the twelve apostles, who is there substituted for the Holy Mother of Christ. There the New Jerusalem, which comes down to destroy the three-headed serpent, the figure of Babylon, is clearly described; and the book from which we cited those words is of great authenticity, and printed as lately as 1829.* Having thus touched on the five epochs of the sect, let us return to the fourteenth century, the principal object of our disquisitions. We have already seen the heavenly part of the sectarian theory, reduced to practice in the doctrines of Lollard;

* It was published by forty sectarians of various degrees, many of whom are exemplary ecclesiastics or honourable citizens, who, having assembled together to discuss some very important case, abjured the sect in the presence of a numerous concourse of people, and unanimously resolved to publish the whole ritual of the secret society they were abandoning.

and of his twelve apostles, and in the earthly paradise; and if we seek for the infernal part, we shall find it in the bold writings of that Englishman who succeeded him; writings which were condemned by the Council of Constance, and for all that, publicly professed by a host of armed sectarians in Great Britain and Bohemia;—works fatal to Rome, from which we extracted some scanty portions in our first chapter. And while Wickliffe was thus openly teaching in England by means of those dogmatic or declamatory writings, that the Pope was the devil incarnate* opposed to the incarnate God, Petrarch was doing the same thing elsewhere, in his epistles *sine titulo*, and his mysterious eclogues; Boccaccio was busy on his Filocopo and his bucolick; Bartolo was imagining his forensic cause; Frezzi was writing his poem; and many others were at work, not only in Italy, but in Provence, in Spain, in France, and in Germany, with fictions variously concerted, according to the rules of that school which produced Dante's poem. And these were the men whom that Carthusian apostle, who so alarmed Boccaccio, was to travel over hills and seas to convert, reserving his last visit for Petrarch; these were the men who, in various languages, professed "The doctrine of the Sacred Helicon." Laura's bard, speaking of his travels in many European countries, says that he visited the English University of Oxford,† the nursery of Wickliffe and Chaucer, who were closely united by the ties of friendship, and uniformity of opinions; nor does the swan of Vaucluse conceal from us that the object of his various journeys was to *seek liberty*.

Let it not be supposed, however, that all the doctrines of Wickliffe are received by the Protestant church, either in Germany or England. There are many of his maxims which, in spite of the artful language in which they are presented, sufficiently betray the source whence he

* The name he gives to Gregory VII.

† Famil. b. 3. Ess. 1.

derived them. It is well-known that " Wickliffe and his partisans, desired to establish equality and independence among men ;"* and that the rebellion of the English peasants against the barons, which agitated Great Britain during his life-time, when more than 100,000 armed men rose to demand *liberty* and their rights, was the dire effect of those feelings which had been excited by the writings of the fierce antipapalist.

The followers of Wickliffe and Lollard included some of the most distinguished churchmen and literary characters in England ; and to counterbalance the power of their enemy, they entered into an association. Chaucer, the father of English poetry, was one of their number. He was persecuted by the catholic clergy, then powerful in England, and was compelled to fly to the continent ; but his love of country induced him to return secretly, and he was discovered and put into prison ; whence he was released on consenting to make a public recantation. His persecution only served to increase the sum of his hatred. The weak, who tremble at the threats of the powerful, endeavour to conceal their detestation under a semblance of respect, and to baffle their enemies by cunning. Dante wrote the Comedy and the Convito, when his party were in adversity ; his enemy, seeing his own doctrines professed therein, believed him as devoted as awed, and left him unmolested. When Chaucer left his dungeon, he applied himself to the composition of various works, both in verse and prose ; and among the last his Testament of Love, and his treatise of the Astrolabe, are the most celebrated. Like Boccaccio, he amused his countrymen with humourous tales ; like Petrarch, he sang verses of love ; like Dante, he wrote grave poems ; and, like the Italian priests, the English clergy ceased their persecutions ; vanquished by talent. They pretended not to know that the pavement of the great symbolic edifice is inlaid with *white* and *black*

* Dict. Encycl. art. *Wiclef.*

stones, and is called *Egyptian mosaic.** "Colours are relative,—*white*, more or less dazzling, shows the degree of *truth* or *wisdom*; in hell, the garments are *black* and dirty, relating to the degree of evil or falsehood." (Swed. p. 40.) Hence Fazio described Imperial and Papal Rome, as white and black; and the highest degree of the sect is called *of the white and black eagle*; Trithmius expressed the very same idea, by the day and night spirits of his mysterious Steganography; and we are assured by those who understood the language of those spirits, that they signify nothing more than the two different sides of the jargon.†

Petrarch wrote of the same things in the last and most enigmatic of his pastorals, where the two allegorical ladies Fusca and Fulgida are at the tomb of Laura; and again, in his canzone, "Standomi un giorno," &c. where the *white* and *black* vessel (ivory and ebony) breaks on an allegorical rock; but the beauty of his verses vanquished the bitterness of his enemy *Death*, and his Laura was suffered to lie in peace in her dwelling of stone.

It will now no longer be a matter of surprise to see, that although the loves of Dante and Petrarch, have by many been always considered as allegorical, none have

* See the description of it in all the rituals of the sect.

† This treatise was composed in that troubled age which was mid-way between Huss and Luther. Lulli, and his master Arnaldo of Villaneuva, both wrote of the same things; the Rosarium of the last explains the process of the different degrees in the Man-Lady, who is first parted in two, and then reunited with two faces, one masculine, the other feminine. The language in which it is written, is founded on the scriptural verse, The Stone was Christ; and it describes man as a stone, first rough, and afterwards polished, and hence called the philosophic stone; an expression whence came that absurd theory of the so-called alchymists, who in another form, professed the same ideas we are here explaining, and were tortured and burned by the Inquisition for them. The Key of masonry explains the principal mysteries of the alchymical jargon, which is but another branch of the symbolic language. One of the most ancient works written on the secret science, is the *Tesoro* of Alphonso X., king of Castile, who declares that he learned it from a wise Egyptian, who enjoined him to conceal it from the unworthy.

dared to say openly in what the allegory consisted. After long study, I have discovered what others knew by secret communications; but had I remained in Italy, I never could have revealed it. Nor would I have entirely raised the curtain here, had not my hand been nerved by the necessity of self-defence.—But shall I proceed any further?—No; from beneath a veil, a voice cries, Touch me not; and I obey it; concluding in the words of Lucretius:

. . . . . Si tibi vera videtur,
Dede manus; et si falsa est, accingere contra.

## CONCLUSION.

How often and perseveringly has the midnight lamp been trimmed by the learned inquirer, in his eagerness to decipher and explain the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian school; and up to this day, how scanty and doubtful have been the results of so much labour and study! The Mediterranean and the Atlantic have been crossed, and the broken and mutilated relics which time's unsparing hand has crushed without annihilating, have been brought in triumph to Europe, as treasures for learning; while, under our own eyes, lie monuments of hieroglyphic figures, not less valuable because entire, but passed coldly by, unprized because unknown. Were they but rightly interpreted, we should behold a new world rising before us; a world containing things, not belonging to men of other manners, or other climes, but to ourselves; things most important and useful, which would reveal to us the undiscovered causes of many a great effect, and assure us of the truth of the following arguments:—

The greatest number of those literary productions, which we have hitherto been in the habit of considering in the light of amusing trifles, or amatory rhymes, or as wild visions of the romantic, or heavy treatises by the dull scholar, are in reality works which enclose recondite doctrines, and secret rites, an inheritance bequeathed by remote ages; and what may to many appear mere fantastic fables, are a series of historical facts expressed in

ciphers, which preserve the remembrance of the secret actions of our fathers.

The obscurity, which not unfrequently involves these works, was studiously and purposely contrived; and if it have never yet been cleared away, (and Dante's Commedia is the first proof of this,) no blame should be attributed to those who might have dispersed it: the difficulties of the time, and the dangers which encompassed them, were sufficient to deter them from so doing. The most learned men, and authors of various ages and countries, were pupils of this mysterious school, and never losing sight of their one grand object, they were constantly on the alert to bring persons of talent and genius to their way of thinking, and to render them co-operators in their bold projects. There can be no doubt that the present state of civilization in Europe is in a great measure an effect of the zeal of this school, whose works were always written with a view to instruct the people, and prepare them for some great change: when the Latin tongue fell into disuse, this was the seminary which cultivated and taught the living languages, and contributed towards the gradual enlightenment of all countries, by enriching those languages with the various productions of talent and learning; thus laying a heavy debt of gratitude upon the world, which enjoyed the gift without knowing whence it came. This was the busy school, which by means of its numerous proselytes, and by dint of ceaseless activity, disseminated in the course of time throughout Europe, that deadly hatred against Rome, which at last, breaking out in different kingdoms, shook the very foundations of the Vatican, and finally produced the reformation in religion; and to effect this, it did not make use of that mystic doctrine, which was sealed in profound secrecy, and communicated to none but a few chosen disciples, but of the evangelical zeal which it saw rife among the people, and of the errors of its adversary, who, by unspeakable and long-endured tyranny, had made the weight of his yoke so intolerable,

that no remedy was left except that of throwing it off entirely. The ungovernable thirst for freedom, and the effervescence of political opinions, which have for so long agitated the hearts and minds of men throughout Europe, are but the tardy effects of the slow, but unceasing labours of this ancient school,* which worked to free mankind from the tyranny of priesthood, as well as from monarchical despotism. The first was humbled, after a struggle which cost many a sad sacrifice; and at this very time, every effort is redoubled to curb the last; but who can measure the tears and blood which will first be shed! May the example of the fall of the first enemies of improvement, be a beacon to warn the present! Rome would still have enjoyed her power, had she yielded in time to the universal cry of the nations, and began the task of reforming herself. But she prided herself on stubbornness and obstinacy; she thought herself able to cope with the united world; and what is she now? History is a great mirror, which reflects the light of the past on the future; happy are those who turn not away from its contemplation!

If what I have here revealed, have never before been written openly, it is because many things are absolutely requisite ere such an undertaking can be commenced. Facts must be discovered by meditation, and not by oral communication, which would be fettered by an oath of secrecy; and the time must be favourable, and the country free, where the fruits of such researches can be published with impunity; the writer must be fearless of consequences ere he venture to spend time, study, labour, and money with the certainty of being repaid by the

* Barruel is of this opinion likewise; but he strengthens it with so few reasons, that his assertions have been laughed at. He maintains, that the French revolution of the last century is to be considered as the effect of the influence of the antipapal sects which existed as far back as the time of Frederick II., and he is quite right in so saying; but the world demands reasons for assertions.

derision and abuse of those readers, to whom novelty, however true, and truth if unknown to them, always seem ridiculous and incredible; and much firmness is necessary to enable him to brook present evils for the sake of future confidence. I found myself, by circumstances, in a situation to overcome some of these obstacles; but another, and more difficult consideration, long withheld my pen. Born and educated in the catholic faith, I feel no sentiment but reverence for the religion I profess, and a decided inclination leading me to cultivate literature, I turned in preference to those authors who had written according to its holy precepts; the voice of ages proclaimed Dante to be no less profound as a theologian than matchless as a poet; deeply did I meditate on his works, and compare one with another: I investigated historical facts, I confronted his opinions with those of other authors; and as doubt swelled to suspicion, and suspicion became certainty, I cannot describe the feelings with which the full consciousness of his hypocrisy overwhelmed me. Still clinging to the hope that I might be mistaken, I studied the sectarian creeds of the time, and the history of different heresies; and then I returned to the perusal of his works; but the veil had fallen from my eyes, and reluctantly I was obliged to recognise him in his real character. But when I entered into an investigation of the mystic books of our own time, and found that the present secret associations are merely a continuation of those ancient ones, with the same rites; when comparing their language and mysteries, with the jargon and allegories of the Divine Comedy, I succeeded in understanding some of those guarded secrets which, until then, I had difficulty in comprehending; when I saw that the study of Dante facilitated the apprehension of many modern productions of the same nature, and that by means of these, all that was obscure and doubtful in him disappeared; when in short, I saw such a connection between them, that one illustrated the other; certainty reached its very extremest limit, and

I was compelled to acknowledge that the Eleusinian learned of those days had reason on their side, when they claimed Dante and his poem for their own.

In examining with attention the works of his contemporaries and friends, as well as those of his successors, I saw the same resemblance in their thoughts, words, and opinions, to the doctrines and practices of the persecuted sects of the times; and I traced the ways of this mysterious language from age to age. Perceiving that Dante was much studied at this present time, and convinced in my own mind that notwithstanding its popularity, the poem had never been either well understood or explained, I could not resist the impulse of vanity, which induced me to publish a part of my researches in an analytical commentary on the Divine Comedy; but my sincere veneration for the Latin church induced me to keep to myself many things which I had discovered. I dared not venture to take the mask entirely off the face of that Dante who was called the theological poet *par excellence;* I showed him as an antipapalist in politics, but still a papalist in religion. But it seems that I did not go far enough to establish my theory on one side, and that I went too far for the critics of the other party; I wrote, in short, for the intellect of those who can comprehend more than a writer can always explain. When I ventured to throw the first two volumes of the Commentary on the public indulgence, its partisans were not so active in its defence, as its enemies were furious in their attack upon it. A few kindly criticisms, and a great many coarse invectives, were my reward for the assiduous labour of two long years. I heard myself reviled as an impious enemy of the catholic church, and a shameless calumniator of Dante, and I was taunted for my ignorance, because I would fain have concealed a great part of my newly acquired knowledge.

One champion appeared to defend me; but moderation and impartiality have very little chance against noisy

clamour. And, to those who had not read my Commentary, it must have appeared that the critics, who abused it, had reason on their side of the question; and that I was an extravagant theorist. Here is a new interpreter, they said, who tells us that all those who have preceded him, in the illustration of the Divine Comedy, from the anonymous friend of Dante, and Boccaccio, and Landino, down to Monti and Perticari, were completely in the dark as to its meaning; and that he alone, after a lapse of more than five centuries, has been inspired by heaven with the knowledge of ineffable mysteries. He tells us that dead men are not dead men, nor are the living alive; that demons are not demons, nor angels angels; and that Lucifer and God are neither Lucifer nor God. He has found out that Hell is Rome; that Paradise is Rome; that Dante did not love a lady called Beatrice; and, more than all, that ladies are men....This was quite enough to render my sanity a matter of doubt. How could I expect, after such assertions as these, that any one would waste his time in reading my work? And yet I fearlessly assert, that that Commentary is the only one which conjures up the buried spirit of Dante, and which chases away the gloom hanging over him. Still it was laughed at by the generality of the world, because it presumed to depart from the slavery of custom; which has been, and still continues to be, an insuperable barrier to the understanding of the secret doctrines hidden within his pages. Several causes had united to render the work unpopular. In the first place, I did not speak out boldly enough; nor say all that I might have said, to substantiate an argument which was founded on cautious and repeated examination. In the next place, had I so willed it, the necessity of marching step by step, at the side of my text, forbade me from enlarging into a general and complete exposition of my meditated system of interpretation. And, finally, I did not venture to declare on what secret doctrine the poem is founded; nor did I explain that my theories were the

result of an analysis of the writings of the ancients, and an examination of the rituals of the sect which entertained those hidden opinions. I perceived that, before I continued the work, I must precede it by something which should supply these requisite points; and, in the present volume, I have commenced the execution of my plan. I was aware of its necessity, before I had reached the end of the second volume of the Commentary; and I then expressed my fears, that I should not make the poem thoroughly understood, until I had compared Dante, in his political character, with his contemporary friends and brother authors.

With a resolution to think no more of the criticisms I had drawn down on my former attempt, I resumed the pen; and the volume, which I here make public, is its first offering. My principal aim has been, to make the ideas and the subject under discussion, as clear and perspicuous as possible; and hence I have avoided all pretension to refinement and luxuriance of style, which would scarcely have been compatible with the severity and complicated nature of the arguments. I was on the point of publishing the work, as a vindication of myself from the unjust charges levelled against me, when, on reading it over, another and serious reflection entered my mind. Why, thought I, should I call, from their honoured graves, the shades of the great departed; and, ranging them in battle array, lead them to the siege of the Vatican? Why tell the world, that those brilliant writers, who have been always considered the devoted servants of the Holy See, were its bitter foes? Why tear the mask of feigned respect from their faces, and show them lighted up in indignation or in mockery? Why prove, that all those, who rose superior to the common herd, regarded the Romish religion as the faith of the blind; and saw, in the establishment of the Papal See, the misfortunes, the shame, and degradation of their country? Why publish the fact, that the pen, which outwardly lauded, inwardly

cursed; and thus hold up to the proscription of bigotry, works, which have been heretofore considered as emanating from the humble subjects of the apostolic authority? Why produce, in multitudes, poems, and comedies, and fables; from Dante and Petrarch, down to the most obscure authors; which can no longer be either prohibited or withdrawn; and range them round about Rome, to hurl their imprecations and deadly arrows against her religion? And Italy, who so fondly cherishes her classic poets, and studies them as models for all succeeding writers, what will she say at this exposure? Why nurture, by such potent stimulants, the evil propensities of human nature? The rising generation will no longer be content to imitate Dante, or Petrarch, or Boccaccio, or Cavalcanti, or Cino, in their outward form: they will devour their inward spirit, and bring forth fruit accordingly. Then wherefore undertake this audacious enterprize, which will only bring cause for regret, when it makes the Catholic religion to be looked upon with contempt? The times are unfavourable for the publication of such things; and it is already too much the fashion to outrage the pontifical dignity; why, then, should I confound myself with those whose motives I condemn? Why, in this age of irreverence and unbelief, when the Church is besieged by a host of living cavillers, unloose upon her the spirits of the dead?—And such mighty dead, too! The same regret, which I felt in my own mind, when I saw that religion had been made a cloak for hatred, I am now on the point of imparting to others. Am I justified in my own eyes, for interpreting and making public the very things which I cannot help strongly condemning? Should I not let those offences, which are now generally forgotten, remain so, rather than expose them to the broad light of day? Let me learn to imitate the wisdom of those who well knew all that I have here revealed, but shrank from the dangerous consequences of publishing their knowledge.

Thus I argued with myself: the thought of my labour, of my loss of time, did indeed intrude itself; and I remembered all the unjust criticisms I had been made the subject of; but still I had the courage to conquer my own inclination, and, with one sad glance at my manuscript, I consigned it to my desk. There it would have remained for the rest of my life; but I soon found that my silence was imputed to a consciousness of error, and that my moderation encouraged the insolence of others, and gave a semblance of confirmation to their slanders. For more than a year, I have suffered these pages to lie unnoticed; but, instead of abating, the impertinence of those who endeavour to contradict my assertions, and misrepresent my intentions, appears to increase; and I am at once derided as a visionary, and execrated as an unbeliever. Silence, therefore, would confirm them in the idea that I feel sensible of the truth of their charges, and that I cannot clear myself from their imputations: hence, by a singular fatality, I am compelled, in order to prove myself a good Catholic, to publish a book which will offend the Catholic church. To show my devotion, I must speak with the tongues of her bitterest enemies; and to satisfy her that I never intended an offence, I must repeat the outrageous language used against her. While few are more faithful than I, my very name may probably be held in abhorrence, because my respect made me silent. How little did I foresee the train I should light, when first I began to interpret the enigmatical pages of the Ghibelline bard!

Here it will clearly be seen, that, in the Commentary, I revealed but a very scanty portion of my knowledge; and those who rave at me as an enemy of catholicism, and a calumniator of Dante, have been, as events prove, the worst enemies both of the Church and of Dante, by compelling me to declare the whole truth as the only means of justifying myself.

I have shown what were the impelling motives which

urged Rome to the commission of those cruelties which injured herself as much as others; I have proved that, had she not forbidden the harmless rhapsodies of a feigned love, the mantle of religion would never have been assumed by those who burned to revenge themselves on her. She converted the enemies, whose blows fell harmless, into false friends, who stood at her side ready to plunge the dagger into her heart; and her present languid existence is the just penalty she is paying for her abuse of former strength. The separation of Italy into small states, which renders her desirable union into one great whole impossible, is, for the Romish See, a memorable and lasting punishment; for it leaves her exposed in her weakness, to the caprices of those among whom, in her folly, she parted what Dante called the *seamless robe*.

Another reason induced me to disregard every consequence, and make these disquisitions public; — I was, above every thing, desirous of acquitting the sons of Italy of the unjust charge of supineness and indifference to the woes of their native land. All our researches will show us the ennobling spectacle of the most renowned of her children straining every faculty, turning to every expedient, grasping at every chance — sometimes openly, sometimes in secret, and from age to age renewed, to raise her from the miserable state of depression in which she has long been kept, and to burst the chains in which violence and treachery have bound her. All was tried, even to this profanation, to attain to the supreme object of their prayers; and they hated their priesthood only because they loved their father-land. From Italy first arose the cry for reform, which was echoed through distant countries as the basis and guarantee of political freedom; and those who charge the Italians with indolence and faintheartedness, are, at this moment, enjoying the fruits of their courage and activity; that they are receiving the blessings of a plentiful harvest, instead of those who planted the land and scattered the seed,

must be ascribed to their own good fortune in living far from that centre where fraud went hand in hand with force in binding the adamantine chains of the people; and they who reproach Italy for her weakness, are as unjust as the man who looks tamely on, and sees a gladiator taken in the toils and hewn to pieces with brutal violence, and then coldly gazes on the quivering limbs and descants on their feebleness.

Was it ever reckoned a crime in the oppressed to pant for freedom? Yes: and even now it is a trespass which obliges an Italian to seek refuge in the land of the stranger. Thus was it with me. A new covenant had been made and ratified between the altar and the throne, by which every citizen was granted full liberty of speech; and I, in our short-lived hours of triumph, sang the wishes and hopes of Italy in verses which were echoed far and near by many a gladsome voice. My reward was — exile; and each revolving year speaks to me in language which will be heard, that there is no pardon for my crime. Three kings have successively occupied the throne, and their wrath seems as hereditary as their crown. The first, with the treaty in his hand, told his subjects: Write; freedom of thought is no longer a crime; and he bound himself by a solemn oath to keep the promise he had made. I wrote, and was punished because I believed him sincere. In order to condemn me on some plausible ground, they sought to lay hold of some action or writing which might have preceded the publication of my verses: but they could find nothing, because nothing existed. The laws declared their incompetency and were silent; despotism declared its will, and I suffered; less fortunate than Dante, for he underwent a trial, and I was banished without one. Thus in every age, patriotism has been punished as a crime in Italy, and the modern martyrs are far more innocent than were the ancient ones. Perhaps my unjust persecution was decreed in mercy that my mind

might be prepared to receive the light of truth; and that I might be forced to seek a home in the land where that truth may be freely spoken. No tie of delicacy now binds me to conceal it, and I may welcome the fate of Dante, if it have enabled me the better to understand the secrets of his mighty genius. At all events, I may repeat the words of Gregory the Great, when he wrote his Comments on the Book of Job, being already well-nigh broken down with misfortunes and infirmities: "Perhaps it has been wisely ordained by Divine Providence, that the miserable and stricken Gregory should explain the words of the afflicted and stricken Job, in order that his own tortures may make him better able to understand those of the bereaved one."

In the present volume, we have entered upon our promised task of searching into truths as undiscovered as they are important; but much more still remains to be done. In our long and arduous journey through unknown and untrodden regions, the never-dying torches of History and Criticism will not fail to shed their welcome light, and guide us on our way in safety; but it will depend on the encouragement given to our first steps, whether we ever finish our enterprise and reach the desired goal. If no kind wishes accompany us in our progress, or watch our safe return from the journey, every inch of which we have already numbered; if the world only speak of our attempt as bold and useless, we shall go no further; and trusting that future ages will have more curiosity than the present, and that they may be less disturbed by the waves of political agitation, and happier in the enjoyment of tranquillity and content, to them we will bequeath the fruits of our researches and meditations.

# NOTES

TO

THE FIRST AND SECOND VOLUMES.

# NOTES.

## Note (A.)—Page 18. Vol. I.

How short-sighted is the policy of those princes who persecute and banish from their dominions men of talent, for political or religious opinions. Instead of winning them over by kindness, and keeping them near their own persons, they drive them forth, and thus free them from all restraint. Under the watchful eye of their government, if they did not renounce their opinions, vanquished by gratitude, they would at least conceal them, influenced by fear; but when once cast forth upon the world, secure from apprehension, and stung by deep resentment, they publish the infamy of their persecutors to their contemporaries, and consign them to the abhorrence of posterity. Are the works we are now citing approved by Rome? Would she not spend some of her best treasures to destroy the evidence of their existence? Then wherefore did she compel their publication by her own actions? Wherefore force the pen into hands so powerful, and swell the catalogue of interdicted works, which have inflicted such irreparable injury upon her? "Banish from thy dominions the insolent aspersor of thy sacred name," exclaimed the courtiers of Philip of Macedon. "What! not satisfied with hearing him revile me in my own house," answered the monarch, "you counsel me to send him away, that he may defame me elsewhere!" He loaded his enemy with benefits, and

his murmurs were turned into blessings. Of such courtiers there is an abundance, but where shall we find a Philip?

The Historical Essay on the Revolution of Naples of 1799, written by Vincenzo Coco, remains an undying monument of infamy to the memory of him who drove him from that kingdom. And who was the cause of the book being written? Who, but the very individual whose character is there pourtrayed so darkly, and whose persecution enabled Coco to write it with impunity? His fate was reversed in time, or it is probable that his revenge would have dictated the publication of other works of a similar kind. I remember to have held a conversation with him one evening on the subject, when he confessed: "They might have made me a powerless enemy; they preferred having me for a formidable one." —"Might they not," I answered, "have made the now eloquent and powerful antagonist, a silent or apologizing friend?" Peace be to his ashes!

## Note (B).—Page 28. Vol. I.

The following are extracts from the original letter:—

"I fled before the persecutor. When forced afterwards to take a wandering journey through various provinces, I sorrowfully related to the Patarini who were dwelling in the city of Como, how I was a solitary wanderer for their faith. They were glad, when they heard these tidings, and congratulated me on suffering persecution for justice's sake. Their kindnesses so bound me, that I promised them to preach to, and persuade, those Christians, with whom I was in the habit of conversing, that in the faith of Peter there is no hope of salvation. As soon as I had engaged myself with an oath to do this, they began to admit me to their confidence; they told me that, from almost every city in Lombardy,* and from some in Tuscany, they sent docile scholars to Paris, who applied themselves, some with dialectic cavils, others with theological dissertations, to discover their adversaries' errors, and to confute those who professed the apostolic faith. In furtherance of the same object, they send merchants to the fairs, in order to pervert the minds of the rich laymen who resort to them. . . .When I took leave of these brethren, they sent me forward to Milan, where I was hospitably received by their fellow sectarians; and thus, whenever I travelled among the Patarini, through all those Lombard cities which are seated on the Po, I was welcomed *by means of signs*. I stayed for three days at Cremona, and then, taking leave of my companions, I went on a pilgrimage to the canals of Aquileia, bearing with me the curses of one of their bishops, called Pietro Gallo, who had conceived a suspicion of me. This bishop was afterwards expelled from the sect. . . . . "

* The Abbé Pluquet and the historian Jean Léger, both write that the Patarini and the Albigenses were also called *Lombards*, because their religion flourished especially in Lombardy.

## Note (C).—Page 50. Vol. I.

We need not go back to past ages, to convince ourselves of the painful truth, that the theocratical government of the Pope is the strongest, if not an insurmountable obstacle to the regeneration of Italy. The dominion of the Pope, and the unity of the country, are elements which clash together, and make that fair region a chaos. On this point, the most virtuous pontiffs cease to be so, and the gentlest and most humane are impelled to follow the hereditary maxim, which forms the basis of their power. Who was more good or venerable than Pius VII. ? and yet he sullied the last days of a life whose blameless tenour had won him the good opinion of the whole world, when his own partial interests came in collision with the general advantage of the Peninsula. A bright moment of hope dawned on Italy ; one part had already, by a bloodless revolution, obtained a national existence ; and the others sprang ardently forward to gain the same prize. Pius saw and trembled at the coming events ; and at the first favourable opportunity, he not only declared that king, who had sworn on the Holy Gospels to acknowledge the constitutional government, released from the obligations of his oath, but anathematized all who had been instrumental in raising the hopes of Italy, or who should dare in future to make a similar attempt. And this was a high pontiff who was always looked up to as a model of public and private virtue ; and this happened in an age of general enlightenment and civilization, when the Pope's authority was comparatively trifling ; how then can we wonder at any thing which occurred in ages darkened by ignorance, when that authority was scarcely less than omnipotent ?

It is also a distressing, but an undeniable truth, that of all the various forms into which religion is divided, the Catholic faith is the most dear to absolute power ; and it seems as though the ministers of that faith have always dreaded the propagation of any other doctrine. Whatever may have been the original cause of this, facts speak for themselves. When France was revolutionized, all the ceremonies of religion were abolished ; but Na-

poleon had no sooner assumed the reins of government, than he saw the necessity for establishing some form of religion before he could hope to unite together the framework of society, or succeed in his design of becoming the arbiter of the destinies of Europe. But not in compliance with public opinion, nor from any sincere attachment or piety, did he make choice of the Catholic faith. This is sufficiently manifested from the fact of his so shortly afterwards imprisoning the Pope, and persecuting the ministers of the altar he had raised. He affected to honour the religion, because it favoured his ambitious views; he insulted its head, because he presumed to oppose them; and it has always been observed, that those who uphold the doctrine of absolute power, are the invariable supporters of the papal authority. The Pope, by his own avowal, was chiefly indebted to the arms of Russia and Prussia, for his restoration to the government of Rome: why those two powers, who do not acknowledge his Church, should have assisted him to recover his dominions, is an enigma which may be solved by a reference to the third article in the secret treaty of the Congress of Verona: — "The contracting powers offer in common their thanks to the Pope for all that he has already done, and they solicit his constant co-operation with their design of subduing the nations."* We invariably see that the least appearance of a desire for political reform on the part of a Catholic state, (not only in Italy, but elsewhere,) is sufficient to excite the wrath of the Romish Church; a religious power which claims to govern alone, naturally goes hand in hand with an absolute political government, and prepares obedient slaves by making submissive devotees. The last requires silent vassals, the first blind believers, and therefore the one always assists the other. Hence, there is a mutual and invincible antipathy between Catholicism and liberal ideas. Nor can it be otherwise, for fire and water are not more opposite in their nature, and whichever proves the strongest, must ultimately destroy the other. When England and Switzerland desired to improve their form of government, they forsook their

* See the French periodical, called *Le Globe*, No. XCI, p. 368. 1st of April 1831, which contains the whole of the secret treaty.

ancient faith: Spain and Portugal at this time present instances of the contrary. Within a very few years France has shown us another example of change: how humbled are those Jesuits now who were so lately triumphant there! and the cause of this is too evident to need any explanation. Rome knows, better than we do, that so long as a nation, either from choice or necessity, adheres to the Catholic worship, so long must it abandon all hopes of a free government, and that if once such a government be obtained, her own power over it is at an end. Therefore was the papal court struck with consternation and dismay at the news of the Revolution of 1830; and while liberalism exulted in Paris, Catholicism trembled in Rome. The following jeu d'esprit emanated in those days from Pasquin and Marforio:—

*Mar.* Sai la gran nuova? Francia il giogo infranse,
E'l Papa che farà sentendo questo?
*Pas.* Che farà? Tel dirò con sacro testo:
Quando il Gallo cantò, Pietro ne pianse.

## Note (D)—Page 65. Vol. I.

The following recent and well-authenticated fact proves that, even at this very time, Rome is called by her ancient title of Babylon. In the year 1830, Rossini's opera of Semiramide was brought out at the Teatro Valle, and an immense crowd filled the house, attracted by the far-famed beauty of the music. The very first words spoken by Arsace, "Eccoti, Arsace, in Babilonia," were caught up by the audience, and received with loud shouts of laughter and clapping of hands, which for some minutes put a stop to the progress of the recitative. When the Pope was first apprized of the circumstance, he determined to forbid a second representation of the opera, but afterwards, considering that such a step would make the world laugh still more, he put up with the affront, and the obnoxious words never failed to produce a similar effect whenever they were repeated.

It is a curious fact that, at the very time when Paul V. was persecuting those who styled him the king of Babylon, his portrait was engraved at Rome, and dedicated to himself, with a scriptural sentence which was uttered for the real king of Babylon. The words applied to the Pope were these:—"The nation and kingdom which shall not serve the same, (*Nebuchadnezzar*, says the sacred text,) I will punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence."—Jerem. xxvii. 8.

There were two famous and corrupt cities called Babylon, and Rome was compared sometimes to the Assyrian, and sometimes to the Egyptian city, and, by Petrarch, to both. The comparison was one of the most valuable resources of the conventional tongue. In the Royal Borbonico Library of Naples, there is an ancient manuscript of the Commedia of Dante, which is in very good preservation, and where all the comparisons are marked in the margin, thus:—*Comp.* These comparisons generally serve as guides to the real and inward meaning of the work, and cannot, therefore, have too much attention bestowed on them. Sometimes they are expressed in a way which requires a more diffuse explanation to make

them intelligible, and we may prove this by the following example.

The *Florentines*, called *Sons of Flora*, are compared to *flowers;* and Dante calls the two parties who divided the city, *white and black flowers*, and himself *white-flower;* the name by which he was called by many. Now he makes use of a very abstruse comparison, to express how he became, from a Guelph or *Black*, a Ghibelline or *White*. He describes himself as a *flower*, first bent and closed by the night frosts, and then *blanched* or *whitened* by the sun (the symbol of reason), which opens its leaves; and what produces the effect of the sun on him, is a speech of Virgil's, persuading him to follow his guidance. Let us consider this comparison a little more minutely, and it will serve to assist our enquiries into the real nature of Virgil.

In the first canto of the poem, the sun having risen, Dante decides upon following Virgil; but in the second, when that luminary sinks, he refuses to go with him any further. The Mantuan then urges him to prosecute the allegorical journey under his escort; and after his discourse, Dante uses this comparison:—

> As *florets* by the frosty air of night,
> Bent down and closed, when day has *blanch'd* their leaves,
> Rise all unfolded on their spiry stems;
> So was my fainting vigour new restor'd——.

And he concludes by saying to the singer of the Roman empire,

> "Lead on: one only will is in us both;
> Thou art my guide, my master thou, and Lord."

On this passage we borrow part of the note from the Analytical Commentary. The sun is absent (that is reason), and Dante's mind is perplexed, and his soul bowed down, until Virgil comes to take the place of that luminary, with his discourse. The Florentine is compared to a flower *bent* and *closed* by the night frosts, that is, prostrate in soul (bent), and perplexed in mind (closed), by the error which fear causes (the frost); and the Mantuan, compared to the sun, lifts up his soul and opens his mind (blanches the flower and raises it). The verb *blanch* is substituted here for *irradiate*. It explains that that discourse enlightened and warmed him, and that it caused him to become a *White* or Ghibelline.

## Note (E)—Page 68. Vol. I.

All titles of authority, although belonging to men, were expressed among the ancients by imageries and names appertaining to women; and this practice has had a secret influence on the grammar of many of the modern languages. Thus the Pope and the Emperor became *Sua Santità* and *Sua Maestà*, and those who surrounded them were transformed into *Sua Eminenza* and *Sua Eccellenza*, *Sua Riverenza* and *Sua Signoria*, &c. with the feminine pronouns, *Ella* and *Lei*, and participles and adjectives of the same gender; and by such devices a nation of men were described as so many females. This custom, which still, from grammatical caprice, prevails in Italy, was invented in past ages, by the authors of mystic doctrines, as we shall bring abundant evidence to prove. Mentor was described as a man, being in reality of the opposite sex; and on the contrary, our allegorical ladies will all be men. The woman of Babylon is the corner-stone on which our attention must be fixed.

## Note (F)—Page 164. Vol. I.

We will bring forward one more example; to show the importance of this rule, by which one name was opposed to another; and to prove how much light it throws over the darkness of these works. The Pope was called the servant of servants, (Inf. 15.) and the Emperor the king of kings.

When Henry VII. went to Rome, for the purpose of being crowned there, he was required to take an oath of submission to the Pope; but he answered, that it would be very unbecoming the dignity of the King of kings, to declare himself the subject of the Servant of servants. "The legates of Clement V. insisted on Henry VII. taking an oath to the Pope; but the Emperor declared that, it would be not only beneath the imperial dignity, but also contrary to the customs of his ancient predecessors, and against the liberties of the Christian religion, were the *Prince of princes* and lord of the world, to take an oath of submission to the *Servant* of *servants:* whereupon the Pope Clement, burning with hatred against the Emperor Henry, stirred up King Robert against him." (Burc. Struv. Hist. Germ. p. 660. Aventin, B. 7. ch. 14. N. 31.) It is worthy of remark, that Henry, when he saw the king of Naples thus urged to rise up against him, not daring to call the Pope, who secretly encouraged him, Lucifer, gave that name to Robert: but it rebounded from the king to the real object meant; because Henry did no more than paraphrase the identical passage in Isaiah, in which the king of Babylon is characterised as Lucifer, who dared to lift himself up against God,—a passage which, in those times, was generally applied to the Pope. True, therefore, the letter was *directed* to the rebellious king, but it was *written* to the rebellious Pope. Henry begins the sentence, in which he compares himself with God, and his adversary with Lucifer, in these words: "God hurled that proud one, who, because he was already high, boasted that he would fix his seat in the

north, and be equal to the Most High,* from the summit of the heavens to the depths of the earth; and consigned him to eternal infamy and endless punishment.—Robert, the son of perdition, swelled with execrable pride, designed to set his seat in the north, opposite to that of the Cesarean majesty, whom he continually presumed to provoke by his frowardness." See the rest of the sentence in the Stor. Aug. of Albert. Mussato in Muratori. Rer. Ital. Scrip. v. 10.

* "I will sit in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Ch. xiv. Isaiah's words, spoken of the king of Babylon, who is there called Lucifer.

## Note (G)—Page 86. Vol. II.

As the secret society, in its interior, is called heaven, or the house of the sun and moon, so the sectarians call themselves angels, spirits, and elect, and we need not again repeat the real title of the head of these angels. Hence, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Cino, and others, call their allegorical ladies *angels;* and the passages where they receive that name, are too numerous and well known to require to be cited by us. The essence of these angels, as we read in their catechisms, and in several allegorical works, was divided into three principalities, or hierarchies, and each of these again into three orders. In the catechism of the first degree, we read the following dialogue, which we translate from the before-cited work of "Les Francs-Maçons."

Q. What is this place called?—A. The house of the sun, moon, and stars.

Q. Were those who were with you like yourself?—A. No, yes, no.

Q. Who were they then?—A. An angel and a spirit.

Q. How did you cross the river?—A. The angel and the spirit assisted me.

Q. Who did you find?—A. Nobody; but they placed me between the two best angels.

Q. By whose orders?—A. By the orders of the first and most excellent angel.

Q. What command did this supreme angel give you?—A. To walk like the elect.

Q. Who showed you the way?—A. One of the best angels.

Q. What did you say when you came to the holy of holies?—A. Things unspeakable.

Q. In what language?—A. In one entirely new.

Q. How did you speak?—A. The supreme angel taught me what I was to say.

Q. What place did you occupy?—A. I was after the best angels, and before the good.

Q. What hour is it?—A. The first hour of the day, &c. &c. &c.

In this language, every thing belonging to the sect is described as a thing of heaven, and all that relates to its enemies is infernal. Hence the many deceptive works, which seem dictated by religious feelings alone. The writings of Swedenborg are mostly of this nature, especially those which relate to the last judgment, the destruction of Babylon, the foundation of the New Jerusalem, the wonders of heaven and hell, &c. &c. None of the mystic writers resemble Dante so much as this Swede, who was more bold, because he wrote in tolerant times and in free England; and yet more hypocritical, because he described, as an historical truth, what the Florentine presented as a poetic fiction. He feigned to have really travelled in heaven and hell, and to have talked with angels and demons, with God and Satan. His works (which exceed fifty volumes) were interpreted literally by those who were unacquainted with their true nature, and were considered by some as the productions of an insane visionary; by others, as the inspirations of a saint from heaven; while those who were angels like himself, and who read his works with angelic eyes, knew that he was neither a madman nor a saint, when he wrote these words: "The instant in which man thinks he is *dying* is precisely that in which he *rises;* when this happens, he enters into the spiritual world, and becomes an angel with a human form; and there are no other angels, but those who become such by leaving this world.* Every new angel in the world of spirits is received by old ones, who instruct him in the *spiritual sense of writings*." And again: "I belong to the society of angels, in which things spiritual and heavenly are the subjects of discourse, although in relation to the affairs of the lower world." Some writers have given themselves the trouble to confute him; Barruel, for instance, who, in his Memoirs on Jacobinism (vol. iv.) wrote: "Would we see a madman in the height of his visionary frenzy? let us follow him in his frequent journeys to the world of spirits. There

* In the catechism of the first degree they travel *out of this world.*

he tells us that there is a paradise in full correspondence with the earth, and that angels do in the other world all that men do in this. There he describes heaven and its countries, its forests, rivers, towns, and provinces. There he talks of schools for angel-children,* universities for learned angels, and fairs for commercial angels, especially those from England and Holland. In his writings, it is always God or an angel who speaks to him. He has actually witnessed all that he describes in heaven, and he has the liberty of ascending there whenever he thinks fit." In Hurd's Treatise on Religions, we are informed, that the violent invectives and calumnies of Barruel against Swedenborg were confuted by the Rev. J. Clowes, the rector of St. John's, Manchester, and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who, besides his defence, in one volume, wrote another, in order to prove "the extraordinary mission of Baron Swedenborg, as an expositor of the sacred Scriptures, and as a seer." We have no hesitation in saying, that neither the confuter nor the defender understood the language in which the sectarian apostle wrote; for had they done so, neither would have written of him as they have done. Nothing but an utter ignorance of his jargon can excuse those who believed him to be a true prophet of Christ, and who, abiding by his literal words, fell into extacies of piety, on the perusal of what they did not comprehend. "It is a fact, that a society of gentlemen in Manchester, only formed for the purpose of publishing and circulating them (the works of Swedenborg) have printed, in the course of a few years, upwards of 16,000 copies, as appears from the annual reports of the society. Various societies have also been formed, in different parts of England, for reading and discoursing on those writings; and in some of the principal cities and towns, as in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Bolton, and some other smaller towns, places of worship have been opened, for the more public circulation of the doctrines contained in these writings, from the pulpit." (Hurd.) Manchester alone contained 7000 disciples of Sweden-

* That is, for those who are first three, then five, then seven years old; who, when they reach nine years, fall in love with another angel, who is exactly nine years old also.

borg's doctrines — of that Swedenborg who wrote that *God is man*. We have not the courage to declare who this God really was, of whom Swedenborg wrote so impiously; but those who understand him, will blush for the folly of his sectarians, who in thousands sighed after the New Jerusalem, which their holy apostle promised to them, and which manifested itself in France at the end of the last century. He, who knew all that his followers were doing to hasten its coming, prophecied: "The day will come when my doctrine will be received in the world; then will the New Jerusalem be established on earth; this New Jerusalem will be the kingdom of the new church, when Christ will reign on earth, in the golden age of true Christianity." We have seen it once! May God preserve us from a second visitation.

## Note (H)—Page 97. Vol. II.

Our examination of Cino's works, in the Commentary on Dante, proved that his friends were not unjust when they taxed him with cowardice and inconstancy in his sectarian character; for from his own confession we learn, that as soon as disasters overtook his party, he went over to the enemy's ranks for safety, and Petrarch probably alluded to this when he wrote to the lovers of all countries: "Weep—for our Cino has *lately* departed from among us." It appears that he often in rhymes urged Dante to follow his example, and retreat from the dangerous voyage he had undertaken; but his friend resolutely answered, that he was already too far committed to the mercy of the waves to think of returning, or taking another course; and at the same time he reproached him with his inconstancy in *love*. In answer to this, Cino replied, that although he had been exiled from his home, and sent to *weep* through the world, and although he was *enraged with death*, yet, that whenever he met with one of *death's partizans*, he told him that *he had wounded his heart;* sheer nonsense, in a literal sense, but very significant in an allegorical one. It is very improbable that Dante would interfere in the private concerns of his friend, or take the liberty of accusing him of fickleness in love, but quite natural that he should reproach him with the inconsistency of his political character. Onesto Bolognese reproved him for the same thing in that sonnet, where he tells him that he scarcely knew him, *he was so changed*. Dante, in his Vulg. Eloq. declares that Cino had formerly been a very eloquent writer in that language, and equal to Guido Cavalcanti and Lapo Gianni, but that he had afterwards degraded himself to a level with those Tuscans whose language was improper; a most unjust charge, *taken literally*. "But although almost all the Tuscans are obtuse in their improper language, yet I have seen some alive to the excellence of the Italian tongue, viz. Guido Lapo, and another Guido a Florentine, and Cino of Pistoja, whom we now set apart as unworthy, and not without good cause." (B. 1. ch. 13.) Cino's verses, as explained in the Anal.

Comm. show the cause of this strange judgment. In one of his canzones, he seems to have been labouring under great despondency of mind, on account of persecutions received. " I am so oppressed with fear of love, that I scarcely think I shall ever regain courage enough to *speak* of it, so great is my alarm. In every limb I tremble, I feel my senses forsaking me, and the approach of *death* seems to rob me of all my faculties," &c. But Cino was not always thus depressed and fearful; for we read that he sometimes gave his counsel to other lovers. Thus, when Gherardo of Reggio asked him whether it could be proper for him to cease to love that lady, for whom lovers *died*, he answered him decidedly in the negative, and bade him console himself with the hope that the present evils would bring forth future joy. The greatest part of Cino's compositions are written in the conventional jargon; and hence Ginguené found them quite devoid of meaning, and was very much surprised at the fame he enjoyed, and at the praises given to him by Dante, and other writers of antiquity. We shall have very much to say on the opposite judgments of the ancient eulogizers, and the modern condemners of these erotic rhymes. The fact is, that the three secret schools, the Templars in the Langue d'Oïl, the Albigenses in the Langue d'Oc, and the Ghibellines in the Langue de Sì, all wrote in a conventional language of love; and hence Dante, in his treatise on this language, says: " In many things those who are learned in these three tongues agree, and especially in the word Love." (B. 1. ch. 9.)

Now, what should we say, were we to hear the Egyptian hieroglyphics called by those who do not understand them, senseless scrawls? I remember to have once heard two peasants laughing immoderately at the idea of any man wasting his time in working the telegraph, which they took for a child's plaything; and I thought at the time of some of our modern criticisms on the ancient rhymes of love. Ginguené, in order to prove their absurdity, translated some of Cino's verses into literal French prose; and certainly in that form, they were made to appear foolish enough; but the same verses, as interpreted in the Analytical Commentary, convey a meaning which makes them both sensible and coherent.

Cino of Pistoja was inconsistent from fear; but Cecco

Angiolieri, another of Dante's friends, was a treacherous apostate, who before he deserted his party, had sung the praises of Alighieri in several sonnets; and in one of them he celebrated the apotheosis of his lady under the name of Bechina.

This Cecco was one of those faithless lovers who went over to the enemy's ranks, and made war on their former master Love, when the Whites were exiled from Florence. The Guelphic king, Charles II., the father of Robert, was then all-powerful at Florence, and Cecco, as soon as he had made up his mind to desert his friends, wrote to Dante, to inform him of his purpose, in a sonnet of which the following is a translation: "Dante Alighieri, I intend no longer to sing of Bechina; call me *Mariscalco* if you will;* for this Bechina is outwardly a golden florin, but inwardly brass; she seems to be a tower, and is no stronger than a balcony," &c. &c. that is, she appears powerful, but can do us no good. He concludes by saying: "Go, my sonnet, to Florence, where thou wilt see the *ladies* and the *young ladies*, and tell them that this Bechina is all outward show. And I will go to king Charles, and please him by giving him information concerning her." These words evidently convey a threat of revealing the secret of the sect to that monarch. In what other sense can we understand them? Can we believe that any lover would be guilty of such folly, as to go to a king, and accuse his mistress, because she was not all that he wished her to be? And wherefore choose that monarch above all others, the persecutor of the Ghibellines, for his confidant, or think it necessary to write to Dante to tell him about it? These are incongruities which a knowledge of the allegorical language clears away.

We cannot tell whether or not Cecco put his threat into execution; but it is a matter of certainty that he made Dante his enemy, and that that poet gave him the name of *Sboccato*, or the imprudent talker, as we collect from another sonnet written by the same traitor, in which he insinuated a threat that he would take vengeance on Dante, by murdering him, if he continued to pursue the subject.

* *Dare del Mariscalco* must mean: call me if you will, the Marshal of Guelphic King; that is, his partisan and servant.

## Note (I)—Page 125. Vol. II.

It was often remarked with some surprise, that Landino, who was a great astrologer, wrote in this place, speaking of the *veltro* or greyhound: "In the year 1484, on the 25th of November, at forty-one minutes after thirteen, Saturn will be in conjunction with Jupiter in the Scorpion. This announces a change in religion; and as Jupiter is superior to Saturn, we may predict that the change will be for the better. I am therefore in great hopes, that the Christian republic will, at length, be governed wisely and well." The first edition of Landino's Commentary bears the date of Florence, 1481, that is, three years preceding the event prognosticated, or, as he would say, calculated. And in the very year and month written down by him, Luther was born, not on the 25th, but on the 22nd of November; of the hours and the minutes, the reformer's mother could give no information. (See Bayle's Dictionary, art. Luther.) Moreover, Luther called himself the *Scourge*, sent by God, to destroy *Babylon* from off the face of the earth; corresponding exactly with what is said of the greyhound, (veltro,) the wolf's persecutor, which in that old edition is written *ueltro*.

How infinitely would the surprise, caused by this species of prophecy, have been heightened, had it then been discovered that *ueltro* is an anagram of *lutero*. For this very curious observation, I am indebted to the most profound connoisseur in Dante I have ever known, whose name adorns the first and last pages of this work.

## Note (J) Page 138. Yol. II.

How ingenious were the mystic writers with their double interpretations! Who would ever guess that those two words, B I C E and T H A 7 U, contain a sense so dangerous? When once aware of the object of the cunning school to which they belonged, we shall feel assured that they were never puerile without having some design in view; and whenever such ambiguities occur, then should we be most attentive. Sometimes they were so very artful that no judge could have punished their secret meaning, without exposing himself to the charge of injustice; the two above-mentioned words are instances of the means employed to tie the hands of the arbitrary Inquisition; and the following example, which is said to have actually occurred in our own time, is quite as ingenious, although not a sectarian device. When Napoleon, not satisfied with his title of Emperor, aspired to become King of Italy, the republicans received the first intimation of his design with rage and despair. In Lombardy, one of them burst forth into the most violent imprecations against him, exclaiming that he would not recognize him for his king, unless his crown were of thorns, his sceptre of reed, and his throne a cross; and he declared that in that case he would salute him, saying "Hail, King!" His words were soon noised about the city, and the police having heard of them, marked him accordingly. This he was aware of, and when the public illuminations for the new king were ordered, he knew that he dared not refuse to follow the general example: he, therefore, displayed in front of his house a magnificent transparency, on which were written the four letters which were inscribed on the cross, I. N. R. I. This inscription attracted the notice and observation of the crowd; some praised the courage with which he braved ambition; others condemned his imprudence in defying power. He was soon summoned to appear before the magistrate, and the satellite of the new government, resolved to punish him for the profanation and insult together, sternly demanded what he meant by the letters which were seen on his house the preceding evening? The offender re-

plied very readily, that they signified "Imperator Napoleo, Rex Italiæ;" and then, after a moment's silence, he retired with a low bow, leaving the officer quite crest-fallen. In every sectarian work we find examples of combined letters, such as T H A 7 U and B I C E, the initials of so many words which convey important meanings. At the beginning of Giambattista della Porta's treatise *De furtivis Litterarum Notis*, for instance, we meet with the word D I L I A, which bears the same sense as the preceding examples. An attentive study of that work, will enable us to discover many of the secrets of our ancient writers, including Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Trithemius, Arnaldo of Villaneuva, and Raimond Lulli wrote in the same style, but they are more obscure than Porta, who, in his Natural Magic and his Comedies, as well as in other works, put into practice the theories laid down in his treatise.

In the now existing sects the sacred word S H I is divided into its elements, and becomes three. "The initial letters are the sacred word." (See Light on Masonry, page 326.)

Dante made use of such initials, not only in his B I C E and his E L, but in other words; and we will here bring forward some which he wrote in common with coeval authors belonging to the secret school. And now, let us remember, that when the demons refused to admit Dante and Virgil into Dis, the Mantuan encouraged his companion with these words: "Fear not—already descends that one (T A L) by whom the land (the city) will be opened to us:"—"Oh, how I long for the coming of *Altri!*" * This *Tal*, if I mistake not, signifies Teutonico Arrigo Lucemburghese, and *Altri*, Arrigo Lucemburghese Teutonico, Romano Imperatore.

So, when Dante appears before Beatrice, to be judged by her, she tells him that it would be in vain for him to deny his crime before such a judge, "da T A L giudice sassi."

We observed before, that Ciacco's answers to Dante, concerning Florence, describe what afterwards took place in Dis. Thus, the three passions which rent Flo-

* See the end of canto 8, and the beginning of canto 9 of the Inferno.

rence, become the three furies who raged in Dis; and the two just men who are said to be in Florence, are transformed into two condemned in Dis. Now we will consider the third question and answer.

*Cultivated* and *wild* or *savage*, are words put in opposition to each other. The savage wood and wild place, are the wood and the place where the she-wolf persecuted Dante; and the cultivated garden, and the earthly paradise are the places where Beatrice appeared to him in majesty. He calls hell the *savage way* (Inf. 23), and the Babylonish time the *savage age* (Purg. 16). The anonymous commentator, who says that he received from Alighieri himself much information as to his style of writing, makes the following note on this last expression: "This is remarkable, and explains what is written in the 6th canto of the Inferno. *The savage party* are those who have separated themselves from the laws, and the *savage age*, the time when men live in vice and sin." From this, it is very evident that the white party, which Dante calls the *good*, is the *cultivated* and virtuous party, opposed to the *savage* and wicked, or black party. In Purg. 6, he describes Italy, while a prey to the Papal, or Guelphic, or black party, as *savage* and *unmanageable*, and his anonymous friend declares that the *savage party*, that is, the blacks, exiled him. In Purg. 24, where Bonagiunta of Lucca, foretells the poet's exile, this interpreter makes him say: "A vile people, that is, *the savage party*, will arise and drive thee from thy country." And elsewhere: "They will declare that Dante and his *fellow-sectarians*, exiled from Florence, are guilty and dangerous enemies of the church of Rome; the sixth chapter of the Inferno agrees with this. And the *savage party* will drive out the other with great violence. (Par. 17.) Jacopo della Lana, in his Commentary, affirms also that the *savage party* means the *blacks*, and not the *whites*.

Let us now hear the question of Dante, and the answer of Ciacco.—

Dante: "Tell me, what will become of the inhabitants of this city, now divided between the whites and the blacks?"

Ciacco: "After a long contest (described in the attack of the Florentine spirit on Dante, and in the battles of the furious demons), they will come to the shedding of

blood: (they fought with each other while the furies urged them on); and the *savage party* will drive the other out of the city (the devils turned away Virgil and Dante from the gates of Dis). Then will the savage party fall within *three suns*, and the other will prevail, owing to the strength of one (T A L), who is coming. He will cause them to lift up their heads, and will keep their enemies under heavy weights."—These were the bold hopes entertained by Dante, who looked forward to a universal judgment, which was to be succeeded by the golden age, enjoyed in the terrestrial paradise.

Hitherto, all writers have interpreted the savage party to mean the Whites; but this is directly contradicted by history, which tells us in plain terms that the Blacks drove out the Whites from Florence; and the corresponding opinion, which made that T A L, who, in the course of three suns, (or three years, as all explain,) was to bring about the triumph of the opposite party, Charles of Valois, the chief who came to assist the Blacks, is still more contrary to fact, because Ciacco is introduced to say this in the year 1300, and Charles entered Florence in 1301; what, therefore, becomes of the *three* suns? Or how are we to explain them? Simply by recollecting that Dante called his jargon the *new sun;* and this will enable us to see his meaning; he says in the sixth canto that in the course of three more, that is, in the ninth, the two allegorical travellers will be able to triumph over the demons in Dis. These letters T A L were ciphers adopted at that period; and they were used so skilfully, and blended so naturally with the construction, that it is hardly possible to recognize them as a sectarian sign. Barberino, in his ode called *Obscure*, which was composed on the death of Henry VII., and written for the understandings of a few readers only, mentions him twice by this name of T A L; and in the sectarian jargon all the subjects of the allegorical God are called Tal, as well as himself, being supposed to be made after his image and likeness; hence Beatrice, when judging Dante, says, that he was T A L in his New Life, a remarkable sentence, which brings the Vita Nuova into connexion with the Comedy; and when Dante determines to follow Virgil, he compares himself to a *flower blanched* by the sun, adding, "I became T A L." Again, Virgil, when he says that Beatrice or-

dered him to guide Dante to the new language, speaks thus: "She (T A L) left her joyful harpings in the sky, who this new office to my care consigned." (Inf. 12.)

Acrostics were already in vogue in the fourteenth century. Dante da Majano, Antonio Pucci, and Boccaccio, were famous for their skill in them. The Amorosa Visione of the last contains a series of acrostics, from which were compiled two sonnets and a canzone, addressed to the faithful lovers. Redi imagines that the Italians borrowed the acrostic from Provence, * but the invention of this style dates from very early times. We have elsewhere cited an example, written by the Bishop Damases, in the first ages of the church, but we doubt whether our readers are aware that those verses contain a double acrostic. Another specimen from the same writer will show them where to seek it.

In rebus tantis, trina conjunctio mundI
Erigit humanum sensum laudare venustE
Sola salus nobis, et mundi summa potestaS
Venit peccati nodum dissolvere fructV
Summa salus cunctis nituit per sæcula terriS.†

Porta's work, *De furtivis Litterarum Notis*, offers many examples of similar acrostics. Dante gave the preference to the syllabic, as more difficult of discovery than the initials. At the end of the Vita Nuova, where his pilgrim thought ascends to see the blessed image which Christ left to us as a likeness of his own figure — he says that he saw his lady in heaven, but in such a quality and degree, that his intellect could not comprehend her. "There where my thought draws me . . . I feel her *name often* in my thought." And we shall soon hear the name which thus haunted his thoughts, in the figurative Rome to which he ascended. When he has risen to the Empyreum, he sees the throne intended for *Henry Augustus;* and, having transformed Beatrice into Henry, and again, Henry into God, he exclaims: "O *triple light*, shining in one star . . . if the barbarians were confounded in Rome, when they saw the Lateran

* See Annot. on the Ditirambo, page 121, ed. de' Class. Ital.

† See these and many others in the last volumes of the *Collectio Pisaurensis*. Pesaro, 1766.

rising above mortal things,* how must I have been astonished, who had come from Florence (Dis) to a just people! I stood like a *pilgrim*, who is restored at the sight of the temple of his vows." (Par. 31.) Further on, he says, that he stood like one who comes from afar to see the holy handkerchief of Veronica, exclaiming: "And didst thou look e'en thus, O Jesus, my true Lord and God!" In that enigmatic part which corresponds with the judgment scene, he describes *the sun darkened, the stars weeping, loud earthquakes*, and *angels who sing Hosanna*;† and then he writes: "I tried to say, O Beatrice, blessed art thou! and I did say, O Beatrice; but my voice was so broken with *weeping*, that the *ladies* who were there did not hear me, and I alone heard her name in my heart." And so, when he was in the presence of Beatrice, in the poem, he could not utter that name:

> "On my faculty
> Such strange amazement hung, the voice expir'd
> Imperfect, ere its organs gave it birth." (Purg. 31.)

Before we show what name this was, we must observe that, by the nature of the Italian language, which requires every word to end in a vowel, the syllabic acrostic frequently allows of an additional letter, or even more than one, when its final is a consonant. This being premised, Dante, having ascended "to that Rome where Christ is a Roman," to see the Emperor who reigns above, and in all parts hath sway, sees his name expressed in the beatific vision of that being who is one in three; and that vision shows us why Beatrice is declared to be the Holy Trinity. It appeared to him thus:—

> "Di tre colori e d'una continENza,
> E l'un dall' altro, come iri da iRI,
> Parea riflesso, e'l terzo parea foCO."

> "Three orbs of triple hue, clipt in one bound;
> And from another, one reflected seem'd
> As rainbow is from rainbow; and the third
> Seem'd fire." (Par. canto 33.)

* In the Lateran, Henry was crowned and anointed with Chrism; and in the Lateran, Filocopo and Biancofiore were baptised.

† Hosanna is sung to Beatrice in the earthly paradise, when she comes to judgment.

Dante's voice failed him when he tried to speak to Beatrice —

> " Tal divenn' io sott' esso grave cARco,
> Fuori sgorgando lagrime e sospi RI
> E la voce allentò per lo suo var CO." (Purg. 31.)

> " Thus, tears and sighs forth gushing, did I burst
> Beneath the heavy load, and thus my voice
> Was slacken'd on its way."

The name of the arch enemy, the Lucifer opposed to this God, was also frequently expressed by Dante in the same way. One instance will suffice.

When the demon of avarice cries to him, Pape Satan Aleppe, he exclaims, " *Who* produces and accumulates all these miseries ?" And then, that we may have no doubt who did cause them, he writes the name three times over, in allusion to the infernal triumvirate, and to the three-faced Satan. —

> " Prenendo più della dolente ri PA,
> Che'l mal dell' universo tutto insacca.
> Ahi *giustizia di Dio* tante chi sti PA
> Nuove travaglie e pene quante io viddi ?
> E perchè nostra colpa sì ne sci PA ?
> Come fa l'onda là sopra Cariddi,
> Che si frange con quella in cui s'intopPA,
> Così convien che qui la gente riddi.
> Qui vidi gente, più che altrove, tropPA,
> E d'una parte e d'altra con grand 'urli,
> Voltando pesi per forza di pop PA.
> Percotevansi incontro, e poscia pur li
> Si rivolgea ciascun voltando a retro."

The last line conveys a hint to those who had passed over the concerted syllables without bestowing any particular notice on their meaning, to turn back again and seek it. Can it be nothing but a mere chance which has brought together these acrostics, and made them correspond so exactly with the Vita Nuova, and with the whole machinery of the poem ; with the persons *meant*, with the spirit of the sect, and with the history of the times ? We should never have dreamed of seeking for them, had not Dante himself awakened our curiosity, and had not our own researches into the sectarian works shown us how frequently they were used.

We might bring forward many more of the resources of this Proteus-like language, besides the hundred and eighty enumerated by Porta; but, after all, these are but trifles in comparison, and the examples already shown are quite enough for our purpose. Although we know that they form an inseparable part of the sectarian theory, and feel entirely convinced that Dante designedly assembled them in his works, still we are willing to relinquish their aid, because we think our proofs are quite strong enough to stand without them; and we have noticed them in this place, in order that the regular course of our arguments might not be encumbered with them. To those who persevere in calling them fortuitous coincidences (as well as the double acrostics of the Bishop Damases and the riddles of Barberino, &c.), we beg leave to repeat our own words from the Commentary: "Whether any of my readers will feel inclined to laugh at these explanations of the concerted syllables, and words in the Commedia of Dante, I cannot tell; but, supposing that to be the case, before I proceed to any more solid and authentic proofs, I here grant them full liberty to consider them all as the effects of chance, and to look upon me as a dreamer. Let them pass as things of nought." (Vol. ii. p. 502.)

After this, was a certain critic quite justified in holding up that commentary to ridicule, for the very things which it bids him look upon as nothing? Was he justified in impressing the belief on those who have never read the work, that the nerve of its demonstrations consists almost entirely in those concerted syllables, &c. and not in the many analytical, historical, and literary proofs, which fill every page, and which we have partly and still more plainly repeated in this volume? Was he justified in putting Dante's verses into a prose form, and then, after thus utterly destroying the local position of the syllables, on which the whole sense of the acrostic turns, presenting his own handywork as a sample of what the commentary explains? What becomes of an acrostic, if verses are turned into prose? Where are we to seek for the letters which compose the words? We might say, with what possible motive was it done? but perhaps it was that he thought his own ideas too witty to be lost, and for that reason favoured the world with them. He says, that

" secrets are got at by piecing syllables together which are scattered throughout a whole line, or even half a dozen lines, when up starts a Ghibelline, or your old friend the emperor—like Harlequin, whose limbs being collected from different quarters of the stage, combine at once into a perfect and living man." (See Quar. Rev. 73. art. 3. p. 58.) Now it does appear to us that, as he is pleased to find fault with our system of interpretation, he ought to have endeavoured to defeat our fundamental arguments; rebut the authenticity of our proofs; and invalidate the historical and literary documents on which they are founded; and not leave all those things untouched, and confine his attacks to the very part which we are contented to pass over as nothing. He goes on to say: " In our eyes, it would be the utter ruin of Dante as a poet; and sundry curious conundrums would be all that we should get in exchange for those noble bursts of inspiration which we had found in him, or thought we had found in him, in the days of our happier ignorance of these rabbinical expositions." But why should these bursts of inspiration lose any of their just value, because we have shown that Dante made use of one artifice more? I exhibit a picture, whose beauty the world acknowledges, but as soon as I proceed to explain that among the shadows which produce effects so truly magical, there are certain ciphers which serve to point out the names of the figures which are traced; from that instant, the grouping, the expression, the colouring, every part in short, becomes worthless in his eyes. Is Raphael's school of Athens a whit less precious, because the Grecian philosophers are all known to be portraits, one of Bembo, another of Sannazarius, another of Castiglione, &c.? and why is Dante's work to be cast aside, because I have proved that his hand guided the pen, fettered all the while?

This reviewer, in spite of Dante's own words, that the meaning of his work is *not simple*, and that if we consider the *real* subject, in its *allegorical* dress, we shall soon discover that he is speaking of *this Hell*, still asserts that the poem is *literal* only, and not *allegorical* at all; that Dis is Dis, and not Florence; that the messenger from heaven is an angel, and not the emperor; that, finally, the whole work is simple. Here I yield the palm to him; I have not the presumption to suppose that I know better

than Dante himself knew, what he did, or what he intended to do. But if there be really nothing mysterious in the scene he cites (from the ninth Canto,) I should be glad to know why the poet entreated those *of sound intellect* to behold the doctrine which he hid under the veil of his verses? I beg leave to refer this critic, for his own benefit, to the observations of Boccaccio, in the fourteenth book of the genealogy of the Gods, where he will find his case treated at length.

If the Hell signifies nothing besides the real Hell, what mean the twenty-two miles, and the eleven miles round the abyss? And the "Pape Satan" and all the other points which we forbear to repeat here? Let our critic disprove, if he can, what we here re-assert, viz.: that the poem of Dante refers to one sole design; that all his other works support it in that design; and that he himself confessed its nature on his death-bed; let him confute the testimony of history, and the works of all those poets whom we have cited in aid of our argument, and then let him talk about the limbs of Harlequin and rabbinical expositions, but not before he can do all this.

And why should a thing become (as he appears to think) of less consequence, by being added to? I do not rob Dante of a literal meaning, by giving him an allegorical one: I have his own authority for saying that the poem has both. Let the critic, then, abide by the first, if he likes it so well; let him suppose that Satan means Satan only; and he may claim what he will richly deserve, the Pope's benediction. If his maxim were followed, that, although he could admire two objects, he will confine himself to one, the Scriptures themselves would suffer. Isaiah's parable, for instance, would be cast aside, because it makes Lucifer a more conspicuous figure than the king of Babylon. We, on the contrary, see every day, that the value of pictures rises very considerably, if it be only ascertained that the Madonnas and saints, represented in them, are portraits of celebrated individuals. But we need not dwell longer on this point; the question to be decided is, whether my interpretation be correct or not. If not, let this critic convince me of the fact with proofs and reasons; for neither is ridicule nor misrepresentation a weapon at all likely to persuade. Without resorting to the use of my opponent's argument, I shall

only here affirm, that were the poem merely literal, it would be of far less importance than it is. And, to prove this, I will confine myself to the instance brought forward by the reviewer. I read, that Dante desired to enter the infernal city, but that he was refused admission by the demons. I think this very absurd, because I see no motive for it; and I am entitled to ask: Why did the author feign this? What could be his meaning for so doing? Why did he ascribe so much power to devils, who were opposing the will of God? And not being able to resolve these questions in my own mind, I am forced to content myself with the conclusion, that he invented this to please his own fancy. This is no sacred book to which I bend in silent faith; it is a poetical fable, and therefore I am at liberty to inquire into the probable motives which influenced its author. But as soon as I perceive that, in that fiction, real and very important facts are expressed, I not only understand why the poet thus wrote, but the fable acquires the value of a history in my eyes; and, far from thinking it an absurdity, without any known object, I see that it relates one of the most interesting events in the life of its unhappy author. The Telemachus of Fenelon can never fail to please, even in its literal garb; but its interest and importance increase twofold, when we know that the youthful Telemachus was meant for Louis the Fourteenth; that the tale of the young Grecian's love for the nymph Eucharis is descriptive of the passion of the French monarch for Mademoiselle de La Vallière; and that the Minerva, in the form of Mentor, who guided the prince of Ithaca through so many perils, is a figure of the wisdom of the preceptor, who endeavoured to lead his royal pupil unharmed through the dangers of early youth, and teach him how to well govern himself and others. Could the most devoted of Minerva's pagan worshippers, if permitted to return to earth, take offence at the use made of the goddess's qualities in the French fable? I think not; on the contrary, while still firmly believing in the divinity of the armed daughter of Jupiter, they would be pleased to see that, in the romance, she is the figure of a mortal not less prudent and learned than good and virtuous. Has he, who added historical notes to that delightful work, injured it? Has he deprived it of all value, and lowered its original standard?

We leave it to others to apply this to our own individual case; only here repeating, that, according to our firm belief, our interpretation of Dante's poem heightens its importance, by proving that it was written as a guide to all Italians, to point out in what way they might best assist their unfortunate country. How, indeed, can we have lessened its interest, by bringing to light the secret efforts made by the most distinguished of her citizens to lift up that cherished land from its debasement, by removing the unceasing cause of it? After admiring Dante as a theological poet, do we disgrace him by viewing him in the character of a philosophic citizen? But, then, his profanation!—Was all the blame his? What other road was open to him? It was a most desperate course, certainly, and most repulsive to all our feelings; but, still, the only one which remained for him to pursue. In the words of their conventional jargon, we may say, that he used magic words wherewith to enchant serpents and take away their bite. Let us, then, be merciful to the means he employed to gain so great an end; and even the concerted syllables and letters will appear any thing but childish, if we consider their design, and reflect that they were so skilfully connected that their enemies were completely blinded as to their secret meaning.

Those who lamented the degradation to which Rome appeared doomed, besought the interference of him whom they called, with apparent devotion, One in Three, to deliver them from their slavery to that Satan who was one in three also. Their laments were published long before Dante lived; openly, if nothing hazardous was contained therein; obscurely, if their personal safety was in any manner compromised.

We have no inclination to prolong our differences with our critic; as he is very candid with the works of the ancients, we have no reason to suppose that he has failed in that virtue towards us. He lavishes so many encomiums on the literal interpretation, as given in the Analytical Commentary, that we should have reason to be very proud, if we could flatter ourselves that it is deserving of all the praises he gives to it. Probably his taste rejects all allegorical compositions; and, in that respect, we should agree. If, therefore, he launches his arrows at the interpreter from a feeling of reverence towards the poet, we

will not presume to complain of the direction they have taken.

To this reviewer, succeeded a censor; who thought himself in duty bound to assure the public that he had written "a censure devoid of malice:" we wonder he did not call it full of courtesy also. In order to present to our readers a perfect model of urbanity and sound reasoning, we will select a few sentences from what he terms "an impartial examination."

"We have attentively read Rossetti's Comments, and heard their praises in high-sounding words; but feel convinced that these were uttered either by those who had taken the matter on trust from others, or by persons who knew as little of Italian history as of Chinese politics.—The fact is, that Rossetti has gratuitously commenced a theory without a due examination of the Florentine's writings; and has afterwards ransacked those very writings for the appropriate elucidation of his ingenious suppositions. The result, however, is, that he has entirely failed—that he has been only clutching at *fumus et umbra*. He tortures grammar and history, criticism and poetry, to prop up his system; he enlists in his behalf, authority and no authority. But, perhaps, Rossetti has not read (at least, with attention,) all the poem.—Dante's memory is blackened—a most gratuitous calumny—and who, except readers who know nothing either of Guelphs or Ghibellines, or of history, or of Dante, or of the Italian alphabet, could have praised such stuff as this?—Our observations on the first volume of Rossetti's work were written long ago; but were not printed, out of pure compassion. The boldness with which he has put forth his second volume, has determined us not to have any more mercy upon him, for he deserves none. Did we not think it worth our while not to allow him any longer to impose most shamefully on our countrymen, we should regret the time lost in reviewing his book; for it is really beneath notice. Let not the reader think these expressions too strong. It is an insult to criticism and to the good sense of the reader, and an abuse of good faith towards those persons, especially foreigners, who are not disposed, or unable, to consult the old Italian historians minutely. We are compelled to say, that he knows nothing about either the Ghibellines or their philosophy. His work has many other qualities common

with Turpin's famous history. We freely confess, that we were so disgusted with the performance that, though we had the patience to read all the first volume, we could not muster patience enough to read through the second. We are sorry to have to undeceive him; and fully expect to hear

Pol me occidistis, amici."

We humbly confess ourselves unequal to cope with our enemy in this species of warfare; we yield the palm of victory to him, and acknowledge ourselves to be vanquished. As he protests that he has no personal enmity towards us, we must take his word for it, and conclude that he only kills his friends out of pure kindness. But although his elegance is most truly enviable, it is far exceeded by his candour, and his understanding and talents are equally unrivalled; the following instance is but one solitary proof among many.

The grand point of his attack seems to be my interpretation of the city of Dis. He assures those who have not read Gio. Villani, that the towers which that historian describes in Florence, were not there at all; and that the Florentines were not in the least afraid of Henry; and in order to be believed, he refers the reader to the very chapter in Villani, where that eye-witness declares that the Florentines were so alarmed for their cavalry, that they remained in great fear for two whole days; he says, too, that it is a vile calumny against those valiant heroes to say, (as Boccaccio says,) that the Florentines were compared to timid frogs,* and that I must have been dreaming when I asserted that in those times the Emperor's name was sometimes written *Enrico*, as Dante, Cino, and Boccaccio all wrote it, because it was always written *Arrigo*. Having, as he flatters himself, excluded

* In the eighth chapter, we showed that Boccaccio figured the Florentines as loquacious and timid frogs; and in the second book of his Fiammetta, he calls Florence "A city full of pompous voices and pusillanimous deeds; the slave, not to a thousand laws, but to as many opinions as there are inhabitants; all within her, whether citizens or foreigners, tremble in the midst of war. She is peopled with a proud, avaricious, and envious race." And yet this critic writes that, when I declare that Dante's comparison of the devils, to frogs flying before an adder, signifies the Florentines, I am guilty of a gross calumny against the valour of those gallant men.

the Emperor from all right to the title of Heaven's Messenger, he takes breath after his fraternal correction, and then plunges into the subject afresh, telling his readers with the greatest gravity, that as he can say something quite new upon the subject, he will inform them who that messenger really was. And who was he, according to this high authority? Why Mercury, with his caduceus, who descended into the hell of the Christians; and to prove this theory, he quotes a long string of passages from mythological writers, which tell us that Mercury had a caduceus, and show at all events, that the critic who discovers such a want of erudition in others, has a copious store for his own purposes, in the dictionaries whence all his knowledge is derived. He then proceeds to rail at my folly, for doing what many others, including the academicians of La Crusca, have been guilty of, viz., preferring one version of the same story to another. In a great number of manuscripts and editions we read, that the messenger of Heaven came like a wind which smites the *forest*, disperses the *wild beasts*, tears off the *boughs*, and carries away *the flowers*, (porta i fiori); while in others we read, *carries them afar* (porta fuori). Now he declares this last to be the true meaning; but why? because it seems to him very natural that the wind should carry the broken branches out of the wood, without either bush or trunk of a tree intervening, or their own weight making them fall; but very unlikely that the wind, after breaking the stems, would carry away the flowers, and scatter them with its blasts!

This friendly censor, who could find absolutely nothing good in my Commentary, still did not refuse his approbation to one single point, which he mentions only to disparage the work more easily. Being desirous to make the world believe that the strong arguments I had adduced, to prove that the three animals in the forest, indicate Florence, France, and Rome, were not originally mine, he says that, Dionisi, and now recently, Marchetti, have proved the same, beyond any doubt, and that I have done well in adopting their interpretation. In answer to this, we may cite an observation written by a learned and living authority, more than a year previous to the review penned by this oracle. "It is true that Dionisi and some other commentators had given the same explanation of these

three allegories; but Rossetti adds so many remarks to theirs, that we cannot deny him the merit of having given the very highest degree of probability to his interpretation! (See the Revue Encyclo. de Paris, F. Salfi.)

One solitary defect, he has discovered in my Commentary, and for that he is indebted to my own avowal. When I treat of Guido Cavalcanti, I shall not fail to explain how I was led into the error, which caused me to commit an anachronism of two years, and contradict my own opinion. And is it a matter of surprise, if while exploring ground so trackless and desolate, my foot slipped once? In the course of two thick volumes, replete with ancient doctrines, reflections, quotations, dates, facts and documents, historical, diplomatic and poetical, could I flatter myself with the idea of being entirely free from error?

He denies that Rome ever paid homage to Henry, while we know that he was crowned there with acclamations, that he had the command of the fortress and senate, with an army, a court, a party, and the possession of the greatest part of the city, as far as the castle of St. Angelo. He says that the University of Bologna, where the Emperor was declared to be a god upon earth, professed Guelphic principles. He asserts that that city, for seventy years, never gave an asylum to the *Whites* of Florence, while we know that it was the very city which, while Dante was an exile, espoused their cause, and undertook an expedition against the Florentine Blacks, in order to restore the banished.* He assures us that Virgil is a type of philosophy in general, and that Dante ranked him as a philosopher equal to Plato and Aristotle. But enough of this; we shall conclude in his own words: "Here we stop; not that we have said all that we might have said, but because it would be too tedious a task to

* See Gio. Villani. B. 8. ch. 72, in which all these circumstances are narrated at length. One year after the poet's exile, he writes: "In the same year (1302) in the month of March, the Ghibellines and Whites from Florence, assisted by the forces of the Bolognese, who had declared themselves of the *white* party, and by the Ghibellines of Romagna, came to Mugello with 800 cavalry and 6000 foot." (B. 8. ch. 60.) And we read also in the 83rd chapter of the same book (1305), that the chiefs of the *Ghibellines* and *Whites* from Florence (Dante was one of them), who had been for some time in Bologna, were driven thence by the intrigues of the Florentine Blacks.

point out all the errors into which the learned *censor* (commentator) has fallen." But we had almost forgotten to take notice of the last and gravest fault which he discovered in my Commentary; a fault so heinous that he could hardly believe the evidence of his own eyes when he saw it. I actually wrote that the Pope is a *male* and not a *female;* that is, I declared, as we have already fully seen in the allegory of Beatrice and the woman, that, in this figurative language, *men* are drawn as *ladies.* This was the last gun discharged from his battery, and he invited all his friends to assemble and amuse themselves with the grand effects it was to produce. Whoever desires to examine a perfect model of literary courtesy, profound criticism, and exemplary candour, may find it in the third number of the Foreign Review.

I have thought it my duty not to pass over in silence either the injurious criticism or the violent censure which was written on my Commentary of the Divine Comedy; these two are the only ones which express a decided disapprobation, and the world may see here the weapons which were used to combat it. To its numerous eulogists, I offer my sincere gratitude; the present volumes are an answer to those who differ from me in opinion; but to abuse, to ridicule, to gratuitous assertions brought forward without one valid argument to support them, what can I reply? I close my ears, and heed them not, for Dante cries to me:

> "Come after me, and to their babblings leave
> The crowd. Be as a tower, that, firmly set
> Shakes not its top for any blast that blows."—(Purg. 5.)

TO

## CHARLES LYELL, Esq.

---

Sir,

You have expressed a desire that I should explain more diffusely the general system on which my Commentary on Dante's poem is founded; and, in obedience to that desire, I have commenced the undertaking. I say *commenced*, because my system embraces several ages and countries, and a host of writers; and cannot possibly be explained by one author without calling on others, who worked with the same secret machinery, as confirming witnesses. Above all, I consider it most important to ascertain what was the nature of the school which educated so many pupils, and the doctrine which gave birth to such a variety of productions; and these will be my chief objects, in the subsequent part of this work, if the public voice should call for its continuance. I may assure you with perfect truth, that the argument will not be found less worthy of attention, as it advances towards certainty; and that, with the materials already prepared in these volumes, the proofs will be more rapidly, and the analyses more easily made; with the additional advantage of each part being more immediately connected with the whole.

I have not forgotten my repeated promise of laying before you my interpretations on Petrarch; indeed, they were already prepared for the press, when I found that the present work had reached the limits of the size I had prescribed to it, and that the fulfilment of my word

would almost double its extent. The interpretation of that chief of lyric poets is so strictly connected with an examination into the works of our most famous novelists, that to divide them would be to weaken both. Although you do not usually smile at my apparent paradoxes, yet I shall not yet venture to name the romantic poems which have the same groundwork as the erotic rhymes of Petrarch. The works of this great poet are many and voluminous; and an analysis of his canzoniere alone would be insufficient to enable us to penetrate his hidden spirit. It is throughout in intimate alliance with his Africa and his pastorals; and on all three he poured the light of truth, in that prose work which he styled *Secretum Meum*. But neither the illustrator nor the illustrated will ever fully reveal their secret nature, without the required knowledge of the sectarian theories on which they are founded. The Vita Nuova, a great portion of the Convito, and the internal fabric of Dante's Paradise, all have the same foundation. You may from this, form some idea how many things must be comprehended in the interpretation I have promised to make. Neither is this all.

The bard of Vaucluse was in correspondence with all the celebrated writers of his age; thus, the most learned men, not only of Italy, but of foreign lands, must bear him company; and we shall be at once immersed in the works of Provençal Troubadours, French Trouveurs, and English bards, among whom your own most mysterious Chaucer holds the chief rank.

This ancient poet, who had a personal acquaintance with Petrarch, relates that he heard him once read the tale of Griselda; this, in all likelihood, was when he fled from England to escape the wrath of the catholic clergy, and stopped at Padua, where Petrarch spent the last days of his long life. The impression of delight, made on him by that tale, was so great, that he determined to invest it with an English dress, which

task he soon executed with all his wonted skill. His poetic tale certainly excels in beauty the prose versions in which the fiction had before appeared; it surpasses them in fire, nature, plot, and variety, but its essence is still the same. While I leave you to estimate the advantages of style, possessed by your own Griselda, I shall content myself with explaining its secret meaning, by the aid of those which preceded it, in order that I may lose no time in complying with the request lately urged by you.

I know of the existence of three Griseldas prior to Chaucer's. The French have brought forward many well-founded arguments to prove that theirs is the original one,* as read in the *Parement des Dames*, and reproduced by Legrand d'Aussy: but the best known is the Griselda of Boccaccio, which is the last of his Hundred Tales, and the finale to the Decameron; and the least known is the free translation which Petrarch made of it into Latin, the same to which you are indebted for the poem of Chaucer. The lover of the Laurel, to explain that it was a mystic fable, called it a Mythology, and thus wrote of it to Boccaccio: "To those who ask me if these things be true, that is, if I have written a history or a fable, I shall answer with the words of Crispus, 'Put your trust in the author, that is, in John,'" where that John, which appears to mean Boccaccio, seems ambiguous. The ancient French comedians turned this mythology into a mystery, Le Mystère de Grisélidis (Th. Fr. v. 2. Amst. 1737), and played it on the stage shortly after Boccaccio's death.† The following is a brief explanation of the mystery, as well as I can interpret it.

* See Legrand d'Aussy, Fabliaux, vol. ii. p. 314.

† "Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the fable was dramatized, under the name of the mystery of Grisélidis, which is still to be seen in manuscript in the king's library; it was printed at Paris by Bonfons, towards the year 1548." (Legr. d'Aussy.)

Its origin is French; and its name Grisélidis, comes from gris, grey, the colour which is half *white* half *black*. The mystic Griselda, the daughter of Giannucolo (diminutive of John) figures the sect in its different aspects of light and shade; and hence Boccaccio makes *Dioneo* (the adjective of Dionæa or Venus) relate her adventures, which are descriptive of those of the love-sect, of whose secret *light* the Venus of the Ninfale d'Ameto sings, "I am the only and triple light of heaven." We have seen, in the Amorosa Visione, how this light was changed into Lucia, in whose eyes dwelt Fiammetta, and who differed not from the Lucia who sent Beatrice to save Dante from the wolf, which Lucia afterwards became the eagle (that is, St. John), who raised him to the contemplation of higher mysteries. The design of the whole story is to show how ungratefully Charles IV. treated the sect, and the great sacrifices they made to his caprices. Now let us consider the names of the persons employed in the action, because those names conceal, in a great measure, the mystic sense; the compass which alone can guide us through these unknown seas, as it formerly saved from persecution those who guarded it, and exposed to ridicule whoever disclosed its nature.

San Lucio, or Luzio, is the ancient tutelary saint of that country, which is now pronounced, for shortness, Salluzzo. Boccaccio called it San Luzzo, and Chaucer, Saluce.

The name of the German reformer, who had become the chief of the sect, was Walter Lollard; and we may easily understand for what reason they substituted one chief for another, and called the German Prince who had joined their numbers *Walter*, and made him the Lord of San Lucio, and the husband of the *white* and *black* lady, the daughter of John, whose fidelity and obedience were both severely tried by him. Petrarch gave to his mythology the title of De Obedientia et Fide

Uxoria, in allusion to Griselda's qualities. With this fable, those writers sought to inculcate present patience and future hope on the sect to which they belonged; hence they described a charming vision of futurity, as certain to succeed the picture of the actual suffering state of their Griselda; and endeavoured to make it be believed that, with all his insane vices, her mystic spouse, who was more fit to govern hogs than men, according to the saying of Boccaccio, was preparing a triumph for her, as splendid as it was unlooked for. But this hope went no further than the tale—it was never realised in history; hence the story is half real and half imaginary. The baseness of the treatment experienced by Griselda, was all too true, while her restoration to expected grandeur remained a deceitful hope. And for this reason Petrarch did not venture to add *rewarded* to the title De Obedientia et Fide Uxoria, which he affixed to the half of the tale, for he knew very well, in spite of all his insinuations to the contrary, that although the first part was founded in fact, the second was only a longing desire.* Some of his words are highly important,

* In the seventeenth Ep. sine titulo, after calling the papal court, Hell, and the Pope, Beelzebub, he boldly advises the people to destroy such infamy; and then he exclaims to Charles IV., whom he still trusted, in ignorance of his real character: "To thee I now turn, O unconquered monarch of our age, whose name I do not here repeat, because the subject I am writing on forbids me; and because the greatness and glory of the enterprise to which I invite thee sufficiently declares it. It is enough for us to believe that thou art deservedly crowned with victorious laurels—thou who canst (to say nothing of the justice of thy cause, and the rights thou art claiming,) dislodge from their lairs the intrusive foxes (the Pope and cardinals who were in Avignon), and deliver from chains and misery the spouse of Christ." He then proeeeds to urge him to lead his army into the city, and to use force against that man who was stupified with wine and sleep: "But what have I written? what thought has entered my mind? what have I said? I ought perhaps to repent of my words, but I will not; for I so love the truth, and so hate wickedness, that I forget the dangers to which I expose myself."

as showing what the Griselda really figures,—so much so, that they scarcely make any sense with the external meaning, while they are true, according to the secret one. He says that, although born in poverty, and consequently uneducated, still, that when she became the wife of the Lord of San Lucio, she so conducted herself "that all celebrated her as a lady who had descended from heaven, to save the public;" that in her were "gravity and all mildness," and that her husband commanded her to be treated "as the daughter of the Roman emperor." Such a story must have interested those who comprehended its inward meaning, as much as it must have appeared absurd to mere literal readers. The last saw on one side a stupid resignation, and on the other gross barbarity; while the first read their own fate in that of Griselda, and were deeply resentful when they thought how unworthy had been the return made for all their fidelity and attachment; one class looked upon it as an impossible case, the other as a fact which had actually occurred.

In his letter to Boccaccio, Petrarch tells him, that when he read the tale in the Decameron, he was so delighted with it, that he learnt it by heart, on purpose to repeat it to his friends, in case of any thing similar occurring; he tells him too, that he did repeat it to them, by which he intimates that the case had actually occurred. "It did so delight and fascinate my mind, that, in spite of the anxieties which made me sometimes almost forget myself, I determined to learn it by heart, that I might be able to repeat it for my own pleasure; and that I might talk of it to my friends, in case of any thing of the same nature occurring; and this I soon did; when perceiving that my hearers were highly pleased, I began to think that I might succeed in making such a delightful story agreeable to those who do not understand the Italian language." At first, he was uncertain whether to call it a history or a fable, but he soon decided on giving

it the former name. He proceeds to relate that he gave the mythology to two of his friends to read; that one of them wept so much, that he was obliged to leave off, and though he tried to finish it, he could not for weeping; while the other read it through without stopping, and being asked how it was that the story did not affect him, he answered that he considered it impossible that such a woman as Griselda ever existed. Petrarch says, that he was so indignant at these words, that he could hardly restrain his inclination to reply very sharply.* This double experiment, productive of such opposite results, shows, that he who wept understood the internal meaning of the mythology, while the other, who was unmoved, comprehended nothing. The last stopped at the bark, and saw nothing but improbabilities; the first penetrated to the core, and found the truth; he knew who was meant by the cruel Lord of San Lucio, and the patient daughter of John, the *white* and *black* lady; he knew who were her children, first female and then male, and why they were supposed to be dead, while they were sent to Bologna (the city where the emperor was made a god on earth), to be secretly educated; he knew how to interpret the part which describes Griselda, stript of the garments which she had worn in her father John's house, and then decked in new clothes, and presented with the nuptial ring, only to be afterwards robbed of both garments and ring, and sent back to her father, exposed to

* He speaks of him who wept, in these terms: "He had scarcely read half the tale, when he stopt almost choked with tears. After a few moments had elapsed, he took it up again, with a determination to continue its perusal, and to read to the end; but his tears interrupted him afresh." He who remained unmoved observed: "Where is such patience and unshaken constancy to be found?" And Petrarch concludes: "To these words I answered nothing; in order not to disturb the festive harmony of our conversation by the introduction of acrimonious subjects; but this answer hung on my lips—'Some persons think that what is difficult to themselves, must be impossible to others.'"

the gaze of every eye; he knew why she was then described as being clothed in humble and coarse garb, and reduced to become a servant to her faithless husband's new spouse; he understood what was meant by that husband, after repudiating the daughter of John, marrying the daughter of the Count Pagano with the licence obtained from the Pope, and sent with forged letters from Rome; and finally he knew the value of the mystic numbers, names, and colours — and comprehending all this, which touched him so nearly, he had good cause to weep and lament.

At the end of his epistle, Petrarch tells Boccaccio that as letters were generally opened by order of persons in authority, he should take care to write very cautiously in future. "To prevent our correspondence from falling into the hands of these wretches, I shall be very careful when I write to you or to others, to contrive so that they do not understand me; and thus, I shall be at least safe from their persecutions."* And there can be no doubt, that many of those letters of Petrarch's, which treat of their secret affairs, are composed in the jargon. Such I consider that one to be, in which he says that, while travelling to a Carthusian monastery, he met on his way a company of noble Roman ladies, who were going on a pilgrimage to St. James of Galicia; which letter also relates the dialogue which ensued between them.† These ladies who were going from Rome to Galicia, were of the same nature as that Julia, the descendant of Cæsar, who married one of the race of Scipio, and on her journey from Rome to Galicia, gave birth to Whiteflower, who was successively confined in the Egyptian tower, and baptized in St. John Lateran.

* Almost the same words wrote Plato in his second letter to Dionysius: "I will speak to you enigmatically, and then, if this letter should unluckily fall into profane hands, it will not be understood."

† See De Sade. v. 3. p. 290.

It is worthy of notice too that Boccaccio, to explain the then state of the sect of Love, made Dioneo, the last king of the mystic days, wind up the entertainment of the Gay Company with the story of Griselda; which company met and parted in Santa Maria Novella. It would be very easy to give a more minute analysis of the fable, which we have here briefly described, by uniting the proofs which are to be drawn from the poem of Chancer, to those from the French mystery; and they who understand the language of the birds, with the aid of magic mirrors, will be able to go much beyond us in their interpretations. Forgive me if I have not yet fulfilled my promise with regard to Petrarch; as in these volumes I have fixed Dante as the centre, in which innumerable rays meet and unite together, so I propose to prove of Petrarch in the next volume. We shall find that each, in his own time, was the leader of the sectarian army; and as by means of the first, I have been able to give a certain unity to a very varied and complicated work, so I trust to do by the second. I commenced my enquiries on Petrarch, while interpreting Dante, and I shall conclude my researches into this last, while discoursing on the other. But it will be necessary for me, previously to establish three essential points.—First, to show from what country, and in what age, the amatory style of poetry first appeared in Italy, and by what means, and for what end it came to be used there; secondly, to prove that its effusions were in a sectarian jargon; and thirdly, to establish beyond a doubt, the true nature of the sect, by means of documents and authorities of acknowledged weight. But I would fain know, whether the world cares for the offering I design to make it. Politics now absorb every other interest, and the past is lost sight of in the excitement of the present; probably therefore, I must be content to remain unnoticed, until those peaceful days of idleness return, which induce a wish for more calm and tranquil occupations. But those days are seen through a long, long

vista! The enmity between the people and their rulers is a hydra whose multitudinous heads, no mortal hand seems strong enough to sever; if only one remain, others soon spring up; the consciousness of misery is continually increasing on one side; the feeling of superior strength naturally emboldens the other: a restless desire to obtain new rights, is struggling for predominance with the decidedly expressed will to maintain obedience; and where is the angel of peace who will interpose, to stop the progress of the threatening storm, by reconciling the differences between those who demand too much, and their opponents, who meet every request with a denial?

I am perfectly convinced, that if I had but a fair opportunity of producing my remaining proofs, even the tongue of malice would be shamed; but ere that can happen, its voice will be heard loudly protesting against any further indulgence being shown towards me. I know that there are some upright and sincere critics, whose praises are encouraging, whose opinions must benefit; but experience has shown me, that their number is not large; and that if eulogiums are voices, condemnations are voices and echoes both. The world, at the present time, has need of amusement, and it will be no difficult task to make it laugh at my expense. Let them repeat my theories, and suppress my proofs, and the thing is done. And besides, there is scarce any thing, however strong, which has not one weak side; and can a writer, who first enters on a new line of argument, hope to be infallible? His errors are brought into full light, while his merits are suppressed. Where criticism cannot penetrate, satire can always force its way, and ridicule can generally silence argument, and make itself acceptable to those who are in want of entertainment. But even supposing that this work should have the good fortune to meet with impartial judges, who always equally weigh the good and evil, and never allow Momus to enter, and turn the scale unfairly, still I do not flatter myself that

the truth, which I have laid bare, will triumph either rapidly or completely. I foresee, on the contrary, a long contest between that truth and the falsehood which has so long worn its mask, usurped its place, and belied its name. For where is the man who can instantaneously abandon ideas which every succeeding year has strengthened in him? The force of indolence has even more influence over the mind than over the body. And then I must find a class of readers entirely devoid of any existing prejudices. Indeed, when I examine into my own mind, I feel that I have not the smallest right to complain; for if, eight years ago, any one had said to me: you do not understand either Dante or Petrarch, I should have answered him with a glance of compassion; and if he had added: read this book, and learn to understand it; I should most likely have turned my back on him and his book at once. And this is the case with many.

It is not a very easy matter to understand, even the literal meaning of the Divine Comedy. Those who can do this, when they think of the labour of mind it has cost them, in their own secret vanity, consider themselves as already sufficiently versed in Dante, and would not yield the palm to any. And, if they hear that there is one who has the boldness to declare that nobody has ever yet well understood the Divine Comedy, they, in their own heart, condemn him as an impostor, and feel themselves bound to oppose him with all their might. Behold me, then, at once beset by a host of enemies, comprehending all (and they are not few) who put forward their claims to have rightly understood the works of Dante. Be assured that none of them will gloss over any error, or fail to cavil at the truth. Nay, were I to prove every thing beyond the shadow of a doubt, they would be silent, and would never admit that I knew more than themselves. I must therefore submit to the necessity of hearing a hundred voices exclaiming against my most

trifling error, while no encouraging applause will reward my successful attempts. My defeat will be noisy, my victory unnoticed; and I shall seem to be in the wrong, even when most evidently in the right. There is, again, another class of opponents, a specimen of whom I lately encountered. You will take away all that is most beautiful in Dante, cried he, if you disperse that venerable obscurity which renders him so sublime. The most revered oracle loses all its virtue, if you lead the devotees behind the sanctuary before whose altar they have been used to prostrate themselves. The voice of the god is transformed into that of a man, and those so dreaded answers, on which were founded such a variety of interpretations, become mere deceitful equivocations. Then you think, I answered, that all Dante's merit consists in being unintelligible. I maintain, on the contrary, that his beauties cannot be felt until they are comprehended. All those things which have been hitherto unaccountable, and which appeared written either for caprice or by mere chance, will reveal to us their real meaning and design; they will prove themselves to be of importance, whether in a moral, a political, or an historical point of view, and will be seen, as the natural consequences of one ruling principle, as the links of a single chain. It is true, that inspiration will vanish, but talent and ingenuity will take its place, and the most original of poets will be transformed into a great philosopher. And do you count for nothing the mass of learning which is buried under this darkness? Do you think that a fine picture by Michael Angelo is more valuable when covered with dust, than, when swept of its dingy raiment, it bursts on our sight in all its brightness of colouring, beauty of forms, elegance of grouping, and grandeur of expression? The pictures of indifferent artists may be improved by such an addition, but surely not those of great masters. But if Dante, replied my opponent, wrote with the intention of not being understood, why will you betray him? My answer

was, Dante wrote thus for the vulgar; and let those who wish to remain in that class, persist in their assertions, that I have been dreaming with my eyes open, and writing without knowing the poem.—He understood me — and, with a very unequivocal glance, he took his departure, muttering threats between his teeth.

Another, a warm admirer of Dante, slept, like another Alexander, with the poem under his pillow; and delighting to fancy that it contained ineffable things, he often lamented that such transcendent secrets had never been unsealed. One day, that he was in the midst of his extacies, I felt tempted to console him; I knew him to be honourable and sincere, and I put my manuscript into his hands. He did not dispute my interpretation, but he returned the book, with the following words of Metastasio, written on one of the leaves: —

"Ah non credei
Si funesti adempiti i voti miei!"

And how many will exclaim, like him! Will those who detest the truth, even when they cannot deny it, ever forgive me for making it public?

In what terms should you reply to a man, if he stopped you with violence in the middle of your road, and then turned round to the passengers, and told them that you did not proceed, because your feet were not strong enough? Thus has it happened to me with respect to my Commentary. It has been long completed, and many learned friends urge me to publish it; while its adversaries, in order to frustrate such an intention, declare that I have stopt because I have nothing more to say!

They affect to speak of me as a madman, who dreams that every letter in the alphabet contains an allegory. Now, I have always understood, that those who labour under insanity are unconscious of their infirmity, and that they generally think themselves exceedingly wise; perhaps this is my case. At all events, I shall exhibit to

the world a curious phenomenon—the book of a madman, who explains syllogisms without number, and who, without the least erudition, has collected an infinity of quotations. Blush not, my friend, that the book of this ignorant madman is dedicated to you; it is a well-known saying, that extremes meet. Knowing that the minds of men are thus disposed, I must expect to meet with an extra share of ridicule and abuse; and in addition to the attacks of those who boast themselves admirers of Dante, I shall, doubtless, be favoured with the notice of the lovers of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and of the champions of literature in general. I can easily figure to myself, that those, who so generously favoured me with the titles of *new Turpin*, *ignorant Harduin*, *stupid romancer*, *senseless interpreter*, *rabbinical illustrator*, *cabalistic commentator*, and *harlequin annotator*, &c., on seeing me appear with this new work, will exclaim, one to another: Behold, this dreamer cometh; let us slay him! and will again, perhaps, expect me to cry—Pol me occidistis, amici! But is there any one among them who remembers the sequel of that dreamer's adventures?

Why, then, do I publish a work, for which I anticipate nothing but odium and abuse? Because I venture to look forward to something better, when the petty jealousies of the present shall be all forgotten. Time is the avenger of the truth; the sun is not always obscured with clouds; and, in the course of a few years, I doubt not, that some person of influence will be induced to read the work out of curiosity. The importance of the subject will attract his attention; and he will scrutinise it with diligent care. On finding it founded on truth, he will present it to those who love the truth; and he will probably have several advantages which I do not possess. His task will be easier, and his talent of explaining may be greater, with more authority to obtain confidence. Then will the sun pierce the clouds, and that light, which was once denied, will be acknowledged and

admired. To conclude: If the truths I have here exposed are now acknowledged, their triumph will be my justification. If not, their victory, though deferred for a time, is not the less sure; and my vindication will remain a deposit in the hands of time. Whether praises or censures now await me—the first will not make me vain, neither will the second depress me; because, sooner or later, my object must be gained.

You see, my learned friend, that you can scarcely offer me one consoling word; because, with the expectations I now entertain, I can hardly be much deceived. I shall conclude with the words which I once before quoted to your satisfaction. "Habent sua fata libelli:" the evil-wishers have missed their mark; satire and ridicule humble only the ignorant or the proud; and I do not class myself either with the one or the other. Criticism, which confirms by its approval, or improves by its correction, will perceive that I speak with the accents of truth; and, to criticism alone, I shall say, in the words of that great man, with whose works you are so familiar: "Num fingo? num mentior? cupio refelli. Quid enim laboro, nisi ut veritas in omni quæstione explicetur?"

These are the sentiments by which you will never fail to recognize your most obliged servant and friend,

GABRIELE ROSSETTI.

PRINTED BY STEWART AND CO. OLD BAILEY.

## ERRATUM.

Page 64, in the diagram, *for* 7mo. *read* 7mus.

PQ4390 .R82 v.2
Disquisitions on the antipapal spirit
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
1 1012 00027 9929